真・天地無用！魎皇鬼外伝

天地無用！GXP 17

梶島正樹

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ファンタジア文庫

TAKUMA
"...Ahh, I do wonder... about him."
Takuma muttered quietly, as if staring off into the far distance.
C-Could it be!
The appearance of Takuma dressed as a woman and his thoughtful expression. His older sisters and the two secretaries became engrossed in their own suspicious and rotten fantasies.
SHIN TENCHI MUYO! RYO-OHKI GAIDEN
真·天地無用! 魎皇鬼外伝
天地無用! GXP 17
簾座編
RENZA-ARC
TENCHI MUYO! GXP 17

The young girl addressed Seina politely. Her smart composure, choice of words and overall air of being strict but pretty, made you want to call her 'Chairperson' or 'Class President,' or you would, if this was a school.
RASKA
DOGARU
KUSTO
"Excuse me, but are you the guys who are in charge of district 33, block 45?"
YAMADA SEINA
CHIITO
GUSHUKA

"Ahh, how beautiful. This black glimmer is just supreme!"
JOBIA
The brilliant pervert rubbed her cheek against the large urine bottle with a rapturous expression. She moved at her own perverted pace until the end.

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Chapter One: Choices for Those Left Behind

Doooooooooooooowwwwn! Gaaaaiiiiiiiiiinnn!

It sounded like a large construction site where heavy machinery was driving huge piles. A heavy, gut-wrenching, bone-shaking vibration hit everyone.

“.....But, well, that's absurd.” Sajyu's mumbled.

Souren, Sajyu, and many of the operators in the central command center at the base facility for assisting Yomotsu Wolf in one of the newly established Kamidake residential areas, stared appalled and half openmouthed, at the images on the giant monitor. Those who knew Kiriko well, smiled wryly.

The main monitor in the center of the central command center showed the battle between the Sacred Mechalord “Yomotsu Wolf” and the Heavenly Knight “Moonlit Night” taking place at the training center. Although they were about a hundred kilometers apart in terms of location, the vibrations were still so strong that if you were outside the building, you would feel them as if they were a slight earthquake.

“And even so, it is said that ..... holy relic equipment can only be used by the original five holy machines ...”

The sheer absurdity of the situation even brought tears to the corners of Souren's eyes. But if he was right, the scene before his eyes was beyond absurd, it was nothing short of insane. Yomotsu Wolf was wielding, with both hands, the two relic replicas “The Sun Sword” and “The Great Earthquake,” both of which were large, heavy swords and axes that Kiriko had taken in a duel the other day.

“It's quite insane to even parry those attacks, though.”

As Sajyu said, Moonlit Night's armament against Yomotsu Wolf was a slightly longer curved sword, only one sword as thin as a needle compared to the Japanese sword-like equipment of the two holy relics.

Gyooiiiiinnnggg!

Although there were sounds of metal scraping against metal, most of them were screams from Moonlit Night's sword which could have easily been shattered if they clashed. However, Moonlit Night was ever so slightly deflecting the trajectory of the super-heavy weapons, The Sun Sword and The Great Earthquake.

“Kaguya is also moving better than ever before, but I didn't realize the difference in strength between her and Kiriko-sama was this great.”

“I have to say that she is very good. She is fighting very well with Moonlit Night, which is her first cavalry and is of a much lower rank.”

In other words, Kiriko was piloting Moonlit Night and Kaguya was piloting Yomotsu Wolf, exchanging their cavalry with each other.

“Oh, that .....”

The chief operator of the mermaid tribe's battle analysis team awkwardly raised her hand and displayed some data in the corner of the main monitor.

“..... Oh dear, I can't let Kaguya see this.”

The data was Moonlit Night's operational wear and tear, or in other words, the amount of load placed on each component during operation; if Kaguya's was one hundred, Kiriko's was thirty-five on average, meaning that Kiriko's was by far the least stressful operator.

“..... Sorry, I can't help you.”

Souren turned to Amane and the others with a dejected expression. Originally, Souren’s team had been with Seina, but they had been called in by Hakuren and the others to act as their liaisons with Kiriko’s team. However, at the moment, they were being taught many things, and they were feeling like new recruits in training.

“Kiriko is very good at manipulating the hull with less load, and I think she is modifying the operating program each time she fights.”

“Kiriko is very detailed in that regard ..... And I think it's also important to note that combat between Armored Cavalry fits Jurai's style of fighting, which excels in hand-to-hand combat.”

“Yes, I think Jurai will introduce light Armored Cavalry in the future. You never know, they might even consider a larger one.” Erma said to console the aghast Souren. Both Amane and Neeju chuckled.

“But what about a large Armored Cavalry, I wonder? If we were to bring that up, it would be around Emperor Jurai, wouldn't it?”

“And then Seto-sama or someone would reject it?”

“That's possible.”

It was a joke to lighten the mood, but it wasn't until much later that they learned that it was already being discussed.

“Oops, I think they're about to settle this.” Amane's words caused everyone to look at the main monitor again.

“!?”

Even though they were wielded lightly, both The Sun Sword and The Great Earthquake were super-sized weapons. There was a slight lag in the combination of their attacks, and the lag was

gradually increasing as Moonlit Night deflected their trajectory in a way that encouraged them to do so. Moonlit Night then entered the pocket and thrust the tip of her sword into the cockpit of Yomotsu Wolf, and the battle was decided.

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“Thank you for your hard work, Kaguya-san.”

Kaguya, who had just finished training and returned to the central command center without so much as a change of clothes, did not respond to Souren's words of encouragement, but instead staggered past like a zombie and collapsed onto the sofa in the back, dejected.

“So how does it feel to pilot a Godly Knights?”

Unlike Souren, Sajyu was really enjoying herself.

“..... is great. Incredibly good. The power is unbelievable, the response is direct, and it feels like it's your body, like you're one with it.” The sigh she let out was like that of a maiden in love.

“Kaguya was in the Godly Knights and Kiriko-sama was in Moonlit Night....., so you lost by a double handicap.”

“Moonlit Night is very smooth. But it can’t move so beautifully.”

Dueling by Armored Cavalry was the most important element in determining the outcome of a battle. Especially when it came to Heavenly Knights, there were teams of combat experts and operators who did the analysis. She herself knew how Kaguya moved and fought in Moonlit Night, and that was why Kiriko's performance was so impressive. That was why she knew exactly what Kiriko was capable of. Finally, Kaguya covered her face with her hands and sobbed out of pity for herself.

“I'm sorry for being an unworthy pilot, Moonlit Night.....”

“Ugh.....”

As expected, it was awkward, and neither Sajyu nor Souren could find any words to comfort her. Moreover, there was other data that would drive Kaguya further into a corner, so they did their best to at least look at the operators around them to make sure they did not divulge any of it.

“Here Kaguya, don't cry, don't cry.”

Amane, who had seen it all, approached Kaguya, and since Kaguya and Amane were close in personality, they have become good drinking buddies as of late.

“I understand your depression, but the ..... Jurai royal family, even in the Galactic Federation, is one of the strongest groups of monsters in the human race when it comes to hand-to-hand combat.” She hugged Kaguya's shoulder and gently patted her head.

“Even ..... is the first time they move like that with their cavalry.”

“Kiriko is good at matching things like that for the first time. She's been in various departments in the military and GP, and well, she's a kind of specialist.”

Moreover, she was trained as one of Seto's ladies-in-waiting and also has a lot of real-world combat experience assisting Seina. Naturally, she had also analyzed Kaguya's fighting quirks through live combat training.

“We're honestly surprised, too, but Armored Cavalry fighting really suits Kiriko, doesn't it?”

“Yes, it does. Well, you've found a good goal and you're going to do your best.”

“Yes, Kiriko would like to get more familiar with the cavalry, and she's a very caring person, so I'm sure she'll be very patient with you in training.”

“Well, yes. ..... Thank you very much. I will do my best.”

Kaguya wiped her tears and smiled at the comforting words of Amane and the others. In fact, Kaguya had been getting better and better since she started training with Kiriko. But since Kiriko was her partner, it was hard to tell how much she had grown. Just then, Kiriko came in, showered and dressed.

“Good work!”

“Good work, Kiriko-sama. I'm honestly surprised that you can move so well for your first time as a pilot.”

“I felt it during the direct training with Kaguya-san, but it was easy to control Moonlit Night because she moves surprisingly close to Jurai's fighting style. I've made some adjustments to the operating program, so we'll discuss it with the team and have another adjustment training this afternoon.”

“Oh, thank you..... So, Kiriko, how did you feel about Moonlit Night?” Souren asked Kiriko, looking a little apprehensive.

“Well, it definitely felt a little uncomfortable, like something was being processed.”

“Yah, I knew it. .....”

This fact must have been very disconcerting to Kiriko, especially since she had been told what the Imperial Tree was to Jurai. Although they had only known Kiriko for a short time, they had learned that she was basically a gentle person. But after seeing her anger and fury over the insult to Seina during the duel, they honestly wanted to run away from her. Sajyu, for example, had moved to a position where she could hide from Kiriko's gaze, using Souren as a shield.

“But even in the Galactic Federation, many people, except those who know Jurai and Imperial Trees well only consider them to be weapons. If the third generations of the original Five Sacred Machines are at the top of the list, it's no wonder most people think that way.”

“Well, I'm glad you put it that way.”

Behind Souren, both Sajyu and the operators let out a sigh of relief.

“But what exactly is being done with them, we'll have to wait to find out from the unit in the head that we got in the duel.”

“Kiriko-sama, ... regarding that matter, we have received a notice from the manufacturer of the main unit that they want to collect it for maintenance as soon as possible.”

“Collect it?”

“Of course, you can keep the head as a trophy of the duel, but the main unit has to undergo maintenance by the manufacturer after the duel or after a certain period of time due to confidentiality issues.”

“Are you just renting it?”

“We own the main unit, but it’s a complete black box and cannot be maintained by us.”

“In the past, the manufacturer of the main unit was originally a five-family research institute that became independent. As a result of consolidation, there are now only three manufacturers. In a sense, the technology is that of Renza's top research institute, so we can't be careless with it.”

“I see ..... It's like Galaxy Academy, isn't it?”

“If you look at the technology of Kamidake and Yomotsu Wolf, there is no doubt that their technology is superior to ours, but I don't think it will be so easy to open the package without damaging the contents. Of course, if you take your time, you might be able to .....”

“Here you go!” The conversation was interrupted by the appearance of Petit Washu on the main monitor. “We've finished opening the unit and examining its contents ♡”

““What?!” Souren, Sajyu, and the operators shouted! Kiriko and the others, who knew Washu, were convinced that the timing was definitely on purpose.

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Gathered on the Kamidake’s bridge were Kiriko’s team, Miki and her team with the exception of Fuku and Acha, Souren, Sajyu, and Kaguya, who was still reeling from the shock.

“Um, ... Washu-sama, what do you mean that the investigation is over?” Souren raised a small hand with a trembling voice.

“Hmm? Well, that of course means the main unit and its contents, the Imperial Tree.”

“Does that mean that you were able to open that black box?”

“I had to do a lot of fiddling around, but as long as it's something that has to be opened for maintenance, it shouldn't be too much trouble. If you want to buy some time, it will have to be a much larger system.”

“Ha, ha .....”

(-----How big is that, for example?) Kiriko was about to ask but stopped herself. Either way, the opening had been complete.

“So which Armored Cavalry items were opened?”

“Of course, all of the twelve Heavenly Knights and sixteen Aquius Knights that Kiriko-dono obtained.”

“Eh? That's ..... really?” Sajyu looked at Washu with a look of disbelief, but she managed to recover.

“Well, then! But when it comes to the main units of Heavenly Knights and Aquius Knights, not all of them have the same mechanism. Moreover, there are three manufacturers. Each of them must use a different secret technique, right?”

“Secret technique? I don't mean to say it like this, but it's a very poor technique, if you ask me.”

Poor .....?”

“I've been researching Moonlit Night's level of technology, and I'm getting the impression that the manufacturer of the main unit is almost a monopoly company.”

“Yes, that's true, but .....”

“It was originally the technology development division of the royal family, then it was spun off as a private company, and as a result of consolidation, it was consolidated into three companies ..... Is that relevant?”

“If there are only three companies in Renza, and if the materials of the unit itself are special and monopolistic, it is only natural that there will be collusion, cooperation in a bad sense, and laziness that will stagnate the technology. There may be some differences between manufacturers, units, and each other, but if you have to open one up, it’s easy to predict the structure.”

The Galaxy Academy's overwhelming size and long history, and most importantly, the students and researchers there love to think of and solve these kinds of nasty tricks. When Washu had access to Galaxy Academy's vast storehouse of technology, it was no wonder that no matter how clever the three makers were, they seemed so poor.

“Still, it’s that simple .....?”

“Ah~~, Sajyu....., you shouldn't take what she says too seriously. Just think that everything has been opened anyway, and don't pursue it too deeply. It's easier mentally that way.”

“..... I see.”

Following Amane's advice, Sajyu and the others quickly shoved the shocking thoughts into the back of their minds.

“Ms. Washu, then why didn't you open the ZINV unit before?” Kiriko raised her hand. The atmosphere was beginning to feel like a school.

“Because that one is not to prevent opening, it's for sealing a damaged one. The scan showed that it had been sealed three times. And ZINV itself doesn't want us to open it.”

“So do you know what's inside?”

“Well, there are a lot of parts that I can't scan, so I can't do anything about it at the moment.”

“Wow, even Washu-sama?” Now it was Kiriko and her teams turn to be surprised.

“There are things even I don't understand. Well, I can guess to some extent, but I'd like to have some proof before I open it.”

“But I can't believe ..... that such technology exists.”

“Hahaha, I guess Souren and the others know better than you do.” Petit Washu smiled meaningfully and turned her gaze to Souren and his team.

“Wow, we do?”

“..... hmm? Don't tell me it's not called magic crystal technology?”

“If our technology can't scan it, it's reasonable to think so.”

“Magic crystal?” Kiriko looked around at Amane and the others as quickly as she could, but shook her head in a small way, saying no one knew anything about it. Kiriko took one look at it and immediately looked to Souren.

“That's .....”

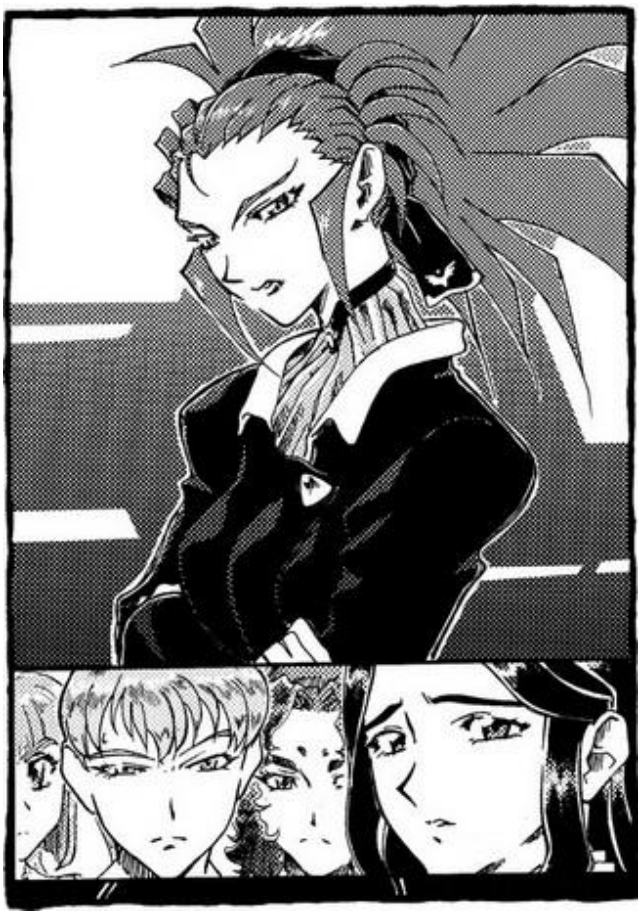
“Well, wait a minute. That's not very important information at the moment, so you'll have to ask them later.” Petit Washu stopped Souren from answering Kiriko's question.

“Ahh, excuse me. Please continue your story.”

Souren and Kiriko quickly straightened up their postures, and Petit Washu, seeing that the others' gazes had turned to her, gave a small cough and changed her appearance to that of an adult.

“Well. Before we talk about ..... this, I want to confirm one thing first. Or rather, something I want you to choose?”

“A choice?”



“Yes, ... a choice.” Washu looked around at everyone with an unusually serious face. The air in the room became tense at once, and Kiriko and the others all held their breath.

Washu's presence carried more weight for Kiriko and her team than that of the head of the Galactic Federation. Even if it was in the form of the humorous and playful Petit Washu, it did not make much difference. Of course, she was trying to ease the tension with her appearance and tone, but the fact that she had changed her appearance to that of an adult, which she rarely showed, suggested that her “choice” was a very serious one.

“First, regarding the contents of the main unit, there are a few matters that conflict with Jurai's top secrets. Kiriko-dono is the only one qualified to know about them, but we have decided that it is necessary for us to share information on this matter, and Jurai has given their approval. Naturally, once they hear about it, they are not allowed to back down. And how to judge and act after knowing it must be decided by all of you.”

“.....”

What Washu said was so heavy that no one could question its meaning. It took a while to figure it out in their heads anyway.

“Oh, um, ... does that mean that is the level of judgment we can make? I feel that we’ll have to make a decision beyond that.” Kiriko's voice trembled a little as she finally said this.

“Normally, this would be something that would be discussed with the head of Jurai and then the head of the Galactic Federation.”

“Jeez, you're kidding!” Amane exclaimed.

Kiriko and Neeju were the only ones who could participate in such a political realm at this point. Amane and Ryoko were barely able to keep up, but they were at the lowest level of the group, just listening and not allowed to say anything.

“Why would you want us to make a decision at such a low level!” Nevertheless, the conversation couldn’t proceed if they just kept looking at each other. Kiriko was the representative of the room. Her tone was firmer than before.

“It is because Kiriko-dono and her team are the only ones who have been in contact with Renza at this point and have been officially allowed to move freely in Renza. Moreover, we need to make an immediate decision on the safety of Seina-dono. He is a first-generation Imperial Tree master, Kiriko-dono is a second-generation master and a member of the Jurai royal family, and the rest of them are close to Seina-dono. In other words, all of them are qualified to become the head of the Galactic Federation in the future.”

“But that doesn't mean that you can just leave it up to us, considering the future of the Galactic Federation and Renza, right?”

“That's right, Washu-sama, isn't this a bit too serious?”

“On the contrary, I don't want to make things too serious.” Washu let out a small breath, taking her gaze away from Kiriko and the others, trying to ease the tension in the moment a little.

“That seems like a lot of trouble to us .....”

“In any case, it is too late for us to discuss it in the Galactic Federation and reach a conclusion. Jurai and the Academy ..... which means that Emperor Jurai and Mikami-dono alone may be regarded as independent. Since that's the case, it's better to leave it to Kiriko-dono and the others to make their own decision.”

“In other words, if there's a problem, you're going to dismiss it as our arbitrary decision?” Kiriko's expression was complicated as she asked this. If she were alone, she would not hesitate, but as long as all the people here were involved, she could not make a careless decision.

“Even though the pirate’s power on the Galactic Federation's side has waned, we still need more time to have a direct exchange with Renza. In a sense, Seina-dono is like a prisoner of Renza.”

“You don't want to create a disadvantageous factor in future negotiations, is that what you’re saying?”

“If it was the consensus of the Galactic Federation, then yes, it will take time for Jurai and the academy alone to coordinate their opinions. If it is the Galactic Federation as a whole, it would be no wonder that it would take on the order of a hundred years. Therefore, if Kiriko-dono and the others are reluctant to do so, I order them to cut off Seina-dono and return home or stay quiet on Recepshi.”

“Oh, no?”

“So, you're on your own. But you've already taken the first step.”

In a duel, Kiriko captured the head of the royal Heavenly Knights and a replica of their reliquary. Beyond inflicting the greatest insult, it was like selling a fight to Renza. Of course, as long as it was in accordance with Renza's formal dueling etiquette, it was not an immediate war with Renza, but it must have antagonized at least some of the people involved with the Next of Crown for each house.

“That's .....”

“If that's the case, why not just us, the Kamidake unit?” Miki interjected irritably as Kiriko fell silent.

“Miki-san!”

“Kiriko-san and the others have a troublesome position, but we don't. The Kamidake is Seina's personal ship, and her sister Ryo-Ohki is a pirate to begin with. If we need it, we can borrow Yomi. In terms of compatibility, we're better than Kiriko, aren't we?”

To begin with, Yomotsu Wolf, built by Washu, was a sister of Kamidake. It would be a great match for Miki and the others, a sub-unit of Kamidake.

“Whether they can handle it as well as Kiriko-dono is another matter.”

“If you're not ready for it, you can train in the acceleration space, or you can combine it with Kamidake. Considering the size of the relic equipment you took; you could even claim Kamidake as a weapon.”

“Oh! That's a nice idea! That's a good one.” Washu's expression turned joyful. She was thinking of all kinds of crazy things.

“Well, if it's going to be a problem, I'll just run away to the next galaxy after I save Seina-kun.”

Miki's actions and thoughts were not blurred, in a good way. Of course, Miki was not immediately superior to Kiriko because she was much more comfortable in her position than Kiriko, but she was also valuable in the sense that she was able to speak her true feelings without hesitation, which Kiriko suppressed. And from the looks on Kirche's and D's faces, it was clear that this was not Miki's sole discretion. Of course, Fuku would not hesitate for Seina's sake.

“Good God, you girls are so scary.” Amane and the others were beyond amazed and even smiled.

Miki and her team were not living in idleness; they were highly trained in combat with Kiriko and her team, and they had the backing of Kamidake and Fuku.

Kirche, as NB, had been in combat with Seina since he went into space, and had played games with Tarrant; Fuku had plenty of experience as Kamidake II, and D had a long history of combat experience with ZINV in the great prehistoric civilizations. Surprisingly, Miki had the least combat experience.

Hey Kiriko, I'm pretty sure that Seto-sama is the one who gave this order, so I think it's safe to assume that she's already done the groundwork here, right?”

Seto didn't like to gamble, and if she was going to leave it to Kiriko and her team, you could be sure that she had already prepared for the worst that could happen. She was probably watching with a grin to see how Kiriko and the others would act.

“Then, why don't we let them have their way too?”

“Yes, that's right. If the other side is planning to cut us off, it would be foolish to pay too much attention to them.”

“We are Seina-san's wives, so we should put our husbands' safety first.”

Amane, Ryoko, and Neeju agreed with Miki. The rest were waiting for Kiriko, the first of the wives, to make a decision.

“.....”

After a moment's hesitation, Kiriko looked at Souren and the others.

“.....What about you Souren? Of course, if you disagree, you can leave this place.”

In other words, Kiriko agreed with Miki's opinion. But they could not force Souren’s team to do so, since that would cause a commotion in Renza, and since Souren’s team was working with Kiriko’s team they could be treated as traitors if they did not do so.

“Please don't worry about us, Hakuren-sama and the others asked us to do this, and our job is to fulfill Kiriko-sama's will in any way we can.” Souren’s team stood in unison, looked at Kiriko and the others with firm eyes, and bowed deeply.

“Thank you. We thank you .....Washu-sama, since that is the case, please continue with your explanation.”

“Hmm. It seems we are all in agreement. ..... I understand.”

Washu activated a huge monitor in the center and changed her appearance to Petit Washu and her costume to a professor's uniform.

“Now ..... Kiriko's Armored Cavalry are 12 Heavenly Knight Class and 16 Aquius Knight Class. In conclusion, all Imperial Trees in the unit were juvenile fixed trees like ZINV. The problem is that all the trees are a kind of clone.”

“Oh no! The cloned trees are ..... excuse me.” Kiriko was about to blurt but decided that even if it was not a top secret matter, she, who did not yet know all the details, should not interject so easily, and restrained herself.

“Cloning from a single cell, from genetic data, cannot produce an Imperial Tree with power. But there is actually a way to make it possible.”

“At this point in time, though, is that something you are allowed to talk about here?”

“Technically, it's not that difficult. It's at the level of early civilization.”

“So you are saying that the technology is not the problem, but the way it is done?”

Souren's expression was quite grim and apprehensive. After all, it was being done in Renza, and there was the possibility the Kiriko would be upset.

“Well, you'll have to wait to hear about that. The point is, we can have them diverge in the stage before the seed grows to fruition. It's just like how twins are born in animals.”

“No way! How is that possible?

“The seeds of the Imperial Tree have a low probability of ripening, but the probability of ripening is almost the same whether the seeds have been modified or not. If we succeed, we'll have multiple identical seeds for sure, so why not do it?”

“..... No way.” Kiriko stared at Petit Washu, realizing something.

“We don't do that in Jurai. I mean, there are natural cases of it occurring, so why bother experimenting with it?”

“Natural twining?”

“Don't you recall hearing about twins?”

“..... Ah! Funaho-sama and Misaki-sama's .....” At the hint from a grinning Petit Washu, Kiriko realized it was Funaho's “Mizuho” and Misaki's “Karin”.

“Kiriko..... could it be that Funaho-sama and Misaki-sama's Imperial Tree are twins?”

“Oh, yes. I guess you guys didn't know. Well, I've already told you, but .....Amane is right, your Imperial Tree is a twin. It's not really a secret, but I'd appreciate it if you could keep it between us.”

Mizuho and Karin have the unique ability of twins. However, they are not used unless Funaho, the First Empress of Jurai, is fighting on the front lines and is in a tight spot.

“I see. So that's what they're artificially creating. Well, if it works, why not?” Amane and the others nodded to each other and turned their attention back to Petit Washu.

“Well, I don't see any problem so far.”

“Is there anything more?”

“Could that ..... have something to do with the probability of the seeds ripening?” Souren raised his hand in fear. He didn't bother to ask here, he knew from the flow of the conversation that it would be explained to him, but he wanted to be prepared in advance.

“I see. The number of upper Armored Cavalry using the unit is small, but there are still thousands of cavalry in Renza as a whole. So that's where the problem lies, right?”

Kiriko's expression was uneasy as she looked at Petit Washu. The “decision” based on that would go around and end up with the issue of Seina's safety. That is why it was 'Kiriko and her teams' sole decision.

“Well, that's the way it is.” Petit Washu paused to allow the tension in the room to settle.

“Now then, the highest level Renza tree is the third generation. That means that it will be used as the main unit of Armored Cavalry only after the fourth generation. And the seeds that have undergone a splitting off would fall into the fifth-generation category, and then we can now germinate the ripe seeds by physically cutting them.”

BAM! Kiriko stood up with a loud stamping sound and a tremendous killing rage. The anger was so great that even Amane and the others, who were used to it, cowered in fear, and Souren and the others collapsed from their chairs, groggy and powerless.

“Calm down, Kiriko!”

Amane could only manage to say under Kiriko's pressure. But her words seemed to do the trick, as Kiriko's deadly intent quickly vanished.

Kiriko sat down in her chair without strength as she mumbled, “I'm sorry .....”

“I know how you feel, so don't worry about it. And it's a decision we all have to make, not just Kiriko's to bear.”

Ryoko and Neeju smiled at Amane's words, their expressions strained, but they agreed. Kiriko exhaled heavily at their sentiments and smiled back.

“Yes, that's right. That's right.”

“.....Well, let's continue our conversation.”

Kiriko and the others nodded to each other and, seeing that the situation had settled down, Petit Washu resumed her lecture.

“Seeds that have been divided and become a fifth-generation seed can theoretically maintain their power up to four divisions, but beyond that, they will wither and die. If they are lucky enough to sprout, they won't have any power. In subsequent generations, it would be possible to divide the seed into four more branches and then into six branches. However, the absolute advantage over conventional technology is only up to the sixth generation, after which there is

no longer any point in dividing the plant, regardless of hybridization. Well, if we continue to use only the division of the generation, it would be possible to use it up to the eighth generation, but after that, even at the rate of technological development of Renza, within a hundred years the alternative will be small enough to be mounted on an Armored Cavalry, and the cost-effectiveness will be reversed."

"You said earlier that you didn't do this in Jurai, but how can you know that much just by analyzing the unit?" Amane asked knowing that it was useless to worry about it, but since Sajyu was in a position to plan operational actions, she wanted to have as much concrete information as possible, and above all, she couldn't be surprised at every little thing. As a side note, the leaves of the main body of Sajyu withered and fell off when she was subjected to strong stress. This had the same meaning as when a head of hair falls out, and she wanted to prevent this from happening.

"My old apprentice was working on this. All we have to do is to verify it with the real thing, and it won't take long."

(Kagato!?) Kiriko was the only one who understood this, but there was no need to mention it now. If necessary, she would share the information with Amane and the others later.

"I see. Sorry to interrupt."

Although it was sufficient just to follow up and verify, it also required a certain amount of time, skill, and above all, specialized knowledge. Sajyu felt like she was walking through a thick fog.

"I'm always open to questions, so don't be shy. Now, the division of the seed is not a problem, but the divided seed is unstable. So they supplement the missing parts with clonal material that has been treated with various chemicals, which stabilizes the seed structure and at the same time prevents the next generation from being born. It's like making a fruit seedless."

"Why would you do that?"

"For the simple reason ..... that they don't want the next generation to grow out of it. In other words, it's for confidentiality. The unit had a system in place that would destroy the secrets if it was opened, but there are plenty of ways to get them out safely."

In fact, this is also why the units are poorly protected.

"That's where ..... goes."

Confidentiality meant to erase the Imperial Tree. Blow it up or melt it down - Kiriko clenched her fists tightly in renewed fury. But then...

"That's terrible. It's just like that time with Fuku-chan." Miki muttered to herself.

She was remembering the time when Fuku was being experimented on at the Tarrant base. She had been subjected to the same thing as the royal tree in Renza that Washu had described.

“!? ..... Yes, that's right. We too saw Fuku-chan as a ..... tool at first, didn't we?”

Kiriko's anger was quickly awakened there, and she looked awkwardly at Petit Washu; it was ironic, but fortuitous, that Miki's words brought Kiriko back to her senses.

“So it turns out, people can be ruthless where it doesn't concern them.”

Kiriko and her team once saw Fuku as part of the Kamidake’s system; one couldn't unilaterally blame Renza for thinking of a lower generation tree as a weapon, especially when it had no willpower.

“Even we are aware of the existence of Imperial Tree and Imperial Ship because there are many facts that we learned because we met Kiriko and had direct contact with Imperial Trees. It's no wonder that in Renza it is seen only as a component of Armored Cavalry ..... before that, I guess you don't even think that there is a will there.”

“Well, it would.”

Souren’s team gave a small nod of approval as Amane and the others looked at them.

“I see...I thought Washu-sama was going to say something in a vague way, but this is not something that can be discussed seriously in the Galactic Federation in the first place.”

“That's right, Jurai doesn't want people to know that they can increase the number of Imperial Trees, but we can't be happy with the way Renza’s trees are being treated .....”

Originally, Imperial Trees were required because of their excessive fighting power, which made other countries distrust it. Jurai refused to provide them on the grounds that they were too few in number.

However, if it became known that it was possible to twin them, they would be forced to give a certain number to other countries or to the GP. As a result, there was a strong possibility that the lower generation Imperial Trees would suffer the same fate as Renza.

“Yes, even if the Galactic Federation holds a meeting, the conclusion is already made, so it is natural that Jurai has no choice but to remain silent.”

“Even Jurai can't come to a conclusion so easily.”

Probably only Emperor Jurai and Seto knew. Kiriko's prediction was correct, and Petit Washu nodded silently.

“That's all I have to say. The rest is up to Kiriko-dono and the others to decide.”

Petit Washu did not leave but sat down at the center table and folded her arms, ready to watch. In other words, she wanted them to consult here and reach a conclusion.

“I don't have ..... time, of course.”

But it wasn't an easy thing to conclude. Everyone looked more puzzled than before they heard the story.

“But since the technology of segmentation and division has already been established in Renza, it means that the information will be leaked to the Galactic Federation side at some point, right?”

“I think that's why they want to buy time.”

“Why don't we just take a majority vote?”

After all, the search for Seina was time sensitive. The more time they spent on Seina, the more troublesome things would accumulate and become more important. No one objected to Amane's “majority vote” proposal, which came close to abandoning the idea, and no one was angry at her for being irresponsible.

“We ..... are not, but my first priority is still Seina's safety. Of course, I sympathize with Renza's Imperial Trees, and I understand that it affects the Jurai trees as well. But in the end, it's up to Kiriko to decide what she is willing to accept.” While everyone was silent, Miki was the first to speak up. As with the duel, she was clearly taking a role in hastening the progress of the situation.

“Yes, ... but once you know, it's not so easy to forgive or make a decision .....”

Kiriko's gaze turned casually to Kaguya. Although completely unaware, Kaguya was also a master of the Imperial Tree called Moonlit Night. In a sense, she and Kiriko could be said to be friends who shared the same feelings.

“.....!”

At that moment, Kiriko realized something important. (Yes! Moonlit Night had accepted me. There was no aversion or rejection toward others. Mizuki didn't feel any discrepancy there either.)

Even though she was an Imperial Tree without a will, Kiriko was greeting Moonlit Night through Mizuki as long as she was riding on a Cavalry with a master. Of course, Moonlit Night had no clear reaction, but Mizuki showed the same friendly reaction as she did to Yomotsu Wolf and Fuku.

(If there was something wrong with Moonlit Night, there was no way Mizuki would not have noticed. That means Moonlit Night has no fear or dislike of people ....., but perhaps a fondness for Kaguya?)

Kiriko thought back to her earlier training.

(.....Yes! Moonlit Night's discomfort is the lack of response.)

Kiriko, in her position as Seto's subordinate, had experience testing combat vessels with lower generation Imperial Trees in Jurai. Surprisingly, they were more straightforward to operate than the higher generation Imperial Trees. Of course, the higher rank Imperial Trees were more

responsive when they start to work well together, but the lower rank Imperial Trees are much easier to handle at first sight.

(The lower generation Imperial Trees don't have a clear will, but it still has something akin to emotion.)

And the goodness or badness of the emotion is directly manifested in the response.

(..... Wait a minute! Think about it!) Kiriko pondered, trying to catch a clue that might give her some kind of clue, and everyone watched her without interfering, perhaps noticing her struggle.

<Yomi. Did you feel anything from your opponent's Armored Cavalry during the duel?>

She would have preferred to ask Mizuki, but Yomotsu Wolf was close by and more relatable, and she thought that just as Fuku and Mizuki were good friends, Fuku's sister Yomotsu Wolf might be able to understand their feelings.

<.....I'm not sure ... but ... but .....she seemed to be crying.>

<She was crying?>

<She was happy to see me. Moonlit Night Chan seemed to be having a good time. >

<Do you know which one was crying? >

<The first ones to play .....>

<Thank you so much for .....>

There is no point in asking any more questions. The one crying was obviously the Heavenly Knights, which were ridden by the next group of riders. But the other Armored Cavalry units, like Moonlit Night, had no ill feelings toward their master. In other words, the act of taking away the heads was tantamount to separating the Master from the Imperial Tree.

(It's infuriating that they're mutilating those seeds as weapons, but ..... that doesn't mean they're all the same when you look at how they treat them.)

If you were from Earth, you knew the saying: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." It was a mistake to try to force people to do what you said because it was different from your own common sense. Each place had its own rules, and those rules may be necessary for survival in that place. Of course, if there was something that needed to be corrected, you should have a discussion, but if you were to suddenly start using force, the other party would not accept your opinion. And if that left a bad impression on the future of the Galactic Federation and Renza… they should move as cautiously as possible.

(In a sense, I guess that means they will cover up for us afterwards .....)

If Emperor Jurai and Seto wanted to, they could “force” the order to return, and there were many ways to coerce Amane and others to do so. It would be a mistake to believe that they did not have any diplomatic relations with Renza.

(Seto is sure to have infiltrated us in various ways).

The same applied to Hakuren and Marci Diplos, who became Kiriko's secretary.

(The issue of Renza's secrets going to the Galactic Federation is out of our hands and not something we have to deal with. And maybe the development of the first Kamidake unit .....)

If you could build a high-performance ship without using the lower generation Imperial Trees, then that would be used as the main force. Especially for military use, it was better to have a steady supply of ships that did not need to worry about wear and tear, and that were good enough for the mission, than to have excessively high performance that was difficult to increase.

Kiriko took a deep breath to calm herself and looked around at Amane and the others.

“It's virtually impossible to stop Renza from doing what they're doing to the Imperial Trees. It's out of our control whether the technology leaks to the Galactic Federation or not. We have no choice but to ignore it. But as for the children who have come under our protection, I think we should be the ones to make the decision.”

The manufacturer's maintenance requirements, for example, were an excuse to recall the units. Kiriko stood up with determination.

“Mr. Souren. You are the original owner of the unit, correct?”

“Yes, of course. The manufacturer is only saying that they will compensate us for maintaining the unit's functionality as a product. Once we open the unit, it is no longer covered by the warranty.”

“So there is no compulsion to demand the return of the unit?”

“Ostensibly, yes, but there is the possibility that they might impose some kind of penalty on the Armored Cavalry and Moonlit Night ..... For example, and they might come to us with a maintenance denial.”

“Kiriko. There are three manufacturers.” In contrast to Souren's puzzled face, Ryoko smiled wickedly.

“Oh, I see. ..... That's one way to go.” Kiriko also smiled wickedly, as if she had thought of something.

“What about Moonlit Night? Of course, we can open it right away, right?”

Kiriko and Kaguya looked at each other at the same time at Washu's question.

“I'll leave it to Kiriko-sama.”

“..... Well, as for Moonlit Night, let's just wait and see what they come up with. If they refuse to maintain it, we'll think about it then.”

“Understood.” Souren and the others all agreed in unison.

“And Washu-sama, depending on the situation, can you do the maintenance here in some cases?”

“Can I do that?”

In any case, with Washu's technical capabilities, even in the worst of conditions, there was no need to rely on the manufacturer, and they could certainly build an Armored Cavalry that was even better. The question was whether or not Washu would pull her own weight then. As a philosopher, Washu was in a position to make ethical judgments about technology, but only about things that were for the general public, and if Washu knew someone who knew someone, the fetters were easily removed, and the result of her hobby was “Kamidake” and “Yomotsu Wolf”.

“Before I do that, there is something I want you to look into, Souren-san. Depending on that, I may have to consult with Washu-sama about various things .....”

“Don't worry about the budget, it's been approved by Lady Seto. Kekeke.”

“I knew it, that bitch!” Amane yelled as she stood up. Kiriko and the others, of course, agreed with her, closed their eyes and wrinkled their brows.

“.....It looks like you don't have to worry about it. I'm going to make that old lady upset at best.”

At Miki's muttering, all the victims who had been pushed around by Seto so much smiled wickedly. And Souren’s group, unaware of this, were trembling like newborn puppies in the corner of the bridge at the strange atmosphere of the group.

“Kekekekeke! This is getting fun, isn't it?” And then Petit Washu, who loved festivals in the Galaxy Academy style, smiled with joy.

Chapter Two: Their Respective Agendas

There were many manufacturers, both large and small, involved in the development of the Armored Cavalry. Only three of them handled products that used the descendants of the original five holy machines, which were the brains and energy generators of the Armored Cavalry. Their predecessor was a research organization under the direct control of the five royal families. However, when the Kingdom became so large that the maintenance and management of the machines became complicated due to the conflicting interests of each party, many problems arose. For this reason, the company was separated from the royal family and made independent as a private company.

Initially, there were five independent manufacturers, Hakusui <Emerald Green>, Suika <Verdant Flower>, Kaen <Flame Flower>, Enma <Flame Polish>, and Mahaku <Polished Amber>. After consolidation, they were combined into three companies. After the merger, there were no more manufacturers in the Kaou family, and they were renamed Hakusuiten <Heaven of Enjoying Emanations>, Enmaten <Flame Polish Heaven>, Mahakuten <Polished Amber Heaven>. Today, the three companies are collectively known as the “three heavens”... <Excerpt from the history of Mahakuten.>

There were five manufacturer representatives, assistants, and secretaries at a round table that was divided into three sections. The expressions on each person's face varied, but given the content of the meeting, the atmosphere was surprisingly optimistic.

“Both Suire and Kasen have refused to hand over all their units. Is there any sign of the units being opened?”

“So far, we haven’t received any signals that indicate the units have been opened.” The beautiful woman sitting next to the representative of Mahakuten answered the question.

Most of the secretaries that each representative had in attendance were their personal companions, that is, their secretaries, bodyguards, and mistresses. They were all beautiful women, but the Mahakuten woman was the most strikingly good-looking of them all. In fact, the other delegates had been eyeing her, and the secretaries had noticed it, and although they didn't show it, they were in a very bad mood inside, wondering what they would do after the meeting was over.

“It's the same here, but I don't need to check that. I don't care how advanced their technology is, it's not something that can be opened quickly. I'm sure they're working hard to analyze it right now.”

“Huh, or maybe you're just realizing your own ineptitude.”

“But how about overconfidence?” The secretary said to herself. The other delegates didn't rebuke her, but rather seemed to be happy to be able to look her in the face with impunity.

Needless to say, the price of the things that their own secretaries were begging for went up after that.

“Wahahahaha, your new secretary is quite a worrier. Or are you not confident in your own technology? Either way, it's a technology that will be useless in six months, and if errors start appearing in less than a year, they'll come crying to us.”

“That's true. However, the refusal to return it is not a very interesting story.”

Well, you'd better give him a run for his money. If they don't have money, they can’t buy stuff.”

“Even so, if you overreact it could cause other customers to distrust us. We intend to respond normally, don’t you?”

The other representatives looked annoyed for a moment at the words of the representative from Mahakuten, but then they quickly smiled.

“Hahaha, you're right. The other party is our daughter's age. I guess I was a little unpopular.”

“It's a shame that you couldn't get the battle data from the duel. It's a shame that he lost so easily and lost his head ... ... It's a shame.”

“The result of this is that they've begged for replicas of the relic equipment and even prototypes under development from various manufacturers. Even though they were in the second place, I don't think those people will ever be able to regain power.”

“Especially those guys. ..... Well, it doesn't really matter anymore. Anyway, it's a shame about the battle data, but even if we could recover it, it wouldn't be worth much. But I'm sure the other cavalry manufacturers are relieved to have prevented any damage to their reputations.”

In the case of royalty, they sometimes used the performance of their cavalry as an excuse for losing. But there was nothing you could do about it if you lost before you could use that excuse.

“A young woman, and she's only one pilot, and they couldn't do a thing. But if the next generation of leaders are in such a bad shape, I am not sure if they will be able to deal with the pirates.”

“If that's the case, isn't it even more urgent that we strengthen our armored riders?” The statement of the secretary of Mahakuten was the biggest concern that they had for this meeting.

“You're a secretary, you should know your place!”

“Mahakuten, even as a secretary, you must take responsibility for your words.”

The two chairmen expressed their annoyance, but inwardly they were pleased with Secretary Mahakuten's roundabout remark.

“... Hmm. I guess it's too early to put this out there.”

Although her expression did not change, she clenched her fists in a position where others could not see. What she said could be used as an excuse to force the Mahakuten to spend heavily.

“Now, if it's imperative that we reinforce the Armored Cavalry, what are your plans?”

“It's always a good idea to get back what was taken from you in a duel. The first thing you need to do is to collect data on that Godly Knight ..., or Sacred Mechalord, I think it's called? We'll need to gather data on that as soon as possible.”

“What exactly are you going to do about it?”

“If we don't have enough combat data, we can work towards increasing it.”

“But after that, the only ones who challenged her were second-rate fighters. If they only had a sense of honor, wouldn't it be the same as before?”

“I'll provide you with two new Heavenly Knight class units that we plan to roll out next year.”

“Hmmm ... because when it comes to granting Heavenly Knight class units, there will be many who will jump at the chance.”

The representatives of the two companies were satisfied with the proposal from Mahakuten.

“Along with that, I'd like to announce a new system, if you don't mind?”

“It's too early to tell!”

Normally, the announcement of a new system was the centerpiece of the year's revenue and subsequent operation and development costs. But if the announcement was made too early, it could hinder the development of the new system, and the company wanted to secure its budget in small increments.

“What do you want?”

“We'll be enhancing the data logger and adding a constant data transfer system. And I'd like to use this as an opportunity to introduce a new ranking system.”

“Huh? That's bold. One is to collect the Galactic Federation's Godly Knight data, but what is the purpose of the other?”

“The rankings are just for fun, but they do have a certain status. Even with the current ranking system, the Federation's Godly Knight should rank pretty high.” In other words, the more Kiriko pushed away from the top ranks, the more people would fall in the rankings.

“Huh? That sounds like a story that would work for a knight with a title.”

“It might be a good idea to draw out the reluctant ones who are taking a wait and see approach. All right. I have no objection.”

“Same here. Well, I guess it's time to call it a night.”

“No objection.”

When they all agreed, the whole scene disappeared. All that was left were the people from Mahakuten. In other words, this was the conference room of the main office of Mahakuten. All the others were images from the conference rooms of their respective headquarters.

It's either money or goods,” he said ... ... “He has a lot of pride for a businessman. I'm in trouble.”

“Things equals technology.” The secretary stretched out and complained in front of the representative. It was an unbecoming attitude for a secretary, but the representative didn't say anything, but rather breathed a big sigh of bewilderment.

“What were you going to do if you were found out, Takuma-san?”

“How do you feel?”

The beautiful woman called Takuma just winked at them. Seeing this, the representative of Mahakuten looked as if the end of the world had come, and he gawked and hung his head.

“Hey! Old man? Why are you crying? I didn't do this for my own good, you know? When I said I didn't want to be found out, my sisters and ... ... your daughters got into the act, you know?”

In contrast to Takuma's panic, the three women around him had big smiles on their faces.

“It's not fair. Taku-chan was also in the mood.”

“Yes. I'm in love with the girls in the secretarial section dressed like that.”

“You used to tease the new boys, didn't you?”

“I've been doing a lot of acting exercises to make sure I didn't get caught. I'll admit it's been a little more fun, though, because it's caught on surprisingly easily.”

It seemed that they couldn't compete with the secretary's daughters who were all confronting them at once, and the way they quickly made excuses, it seemed like they were an older sister and a younger ... brother. Either way, he was superior in position, but he certainly seemed to be the weakest mentally.

“I never thought Taku-chan would look this good in makeup. But come to think of it, Taku-chan is a member of Shinjyu-sama's (Gyokuren) family, right?”

“That's what it looks like when you wear makeup like this.”

“Hahahaha, but the old man found out at once. ......”

“.....”

“Sorry, ... Back to work.”

When Takuma saw the resentful look on the representative's face, he quickly broke off the conversation.

The secretaries, who were called “sisters,” were not happy, but they were afraid that if they continued to joke around any longer, the mother of the sisters, the wife of the representative of the secretarial section might come over. Of course, the older sisters would not get off scot-free, but if the bureaucrat saw him dressed as a woman, Takuma knew what he would be in for.

<The old lady is going to act in a ridiculously oblique way. .....>

-----I had no idea that Takuma wanted to be a woman. .....

-----I'm sorry I didn't recognize your mind!

-----Yes, I know. I know, I know, I know!

-----Please leave this to the old woman.

-----I'm sure it's Takuma's son, or Takuma's daughter.

-----I will find a suitable groom for you, Takuma-sama!

(They might say ..... and do it immediately.)

With a creepy feeling of discomfort in his ass, Takuma cleared his throat and began to speak. He was in on the joke with his sisters and the others, but he wasn't going to go on from there. He liked women properly. “Honestly, I know what you mean, old man. To be sure, I understand where you're coming from, and the outcome of this meeting will definitely be a stain on my record. But I think it's a problem if we can't move forward.”

“However, I think this is a completely brave thing to do.”

“This is my hunch, but I think the main unit has already been opened, and that's why they're refusing to hand it over.”

“What the hell?’

“The other companies will basically take a cooperative approach with each other, but when they see the level of technology, they will become competitive. There is a high probability that each will try to outdo the others and use force behind the scenes. Isn't that what the old man was thinking?”

“If we can make a major breakthrough with any of our technologies, we can't afford to fall behind, but we've given them the slip.”

“That's what our company is all about. If we're going to negotiate, we should treat our best customers like they're our best customers.”

“But then what?”

I'm going to have to use force to turn all the executives against you, okay? Anyone who disagrees will have to go to ... ... and work behind the scenes to get it done. That's what the huge budget is for."

In other words, he was willing to assassinate or purge.

"If you do that, Takuma-sama will ...!

The representative of Mahakuten was shushed by the terrifyingly cold eyes. It was similar to Gyokuren's intimidation. Of course, it was nowhere near that level, but it was still powerful enough to silence him.

"I've never been to a CEO meeting before, and I'm appalled by the stupidity of your people. It made me want to vomit to think that the people there, including me, were wasting half the company's annual budget."

Takuma's budget was being used to pay huge executive salaries, privately divert money to secretaries under the guise of personnel training, and to find material to attack other companies, so any sane person would certainly agree with him. Of course, it was also true that most of them would indulge in that nectar if they were in that position.

"Anyway, it is better to get in touch with Masaki Kiriko immediately. If they won't return the main unit, we can just go out there and check for any abnormalities, instead of doing maintenance. If that's allowed, deactivate the malfunction program."

"Is that ..... okay?"

"If it had been opened, we'd know about it. Anyway, I'm sure the other side has special feelings for the Tree."

"That can be seen from the records of the negotiations that led to the duel in the first place."

"I've always wondered. The trees are topped by the primordial five holy machines, and the higher up you go, the more amazingly their abilities become. If that's the case, then what kind of beings were above the primordial ones?"

"The existence of a parent tree of the Five Holy Machines was expected. And some scholars say that there is a kind of clear will in that tree ... ..."

"I agree with that theory. So, how does she interact with it? Awe? Worship? Is it more like a family member? Either way, if the unit has been opened, she's not going to have a good impression of how we treat it. But judging from their reaction at this stage, I don't think they will dare to antagonize us either."

"If that's the case, then ..... sure is tricky."

“I don't think you need to dare bow to the way we treat them, but you should keep that in mind when you act.”

“You're going to have a hard time convincing the brass.”

Forced removal through coercion and underhanded force. The reason why Takuma had to do it was still not clear to Representative Mahakuten.

“Hey old man, what do you think .....Shinjyu (Gyokuren) was doing when she was in the Galactic Federation?”

“What is .....?”

“The way she's been acting since she came back here, she seems pretty quiet. Considering that, I have a bad feeling about this.”

“.....!”

Shinjyu’s horror was known to all because they were related to her. Their madness, their genius to drive people to ruin, their plague, and their abilities were similar to those of Widow. That's why the main planet of Magiyoku was not the capital. That place was a prison to isolate their crazy leader.

“If that princess ..... is completely Shinjyu's subordinate, you don't get that impression yet, do you? If that's the case, just the fact that we've been able to work together for several years without incident doesn't seem normal. To be honest, I don't even want to be involved.”

“..... That's ..... for sure. I'm sorry I was so careless.”

To be honest, until then, Representative Mahakuten had underestimated Kiriko as a little girl. Of course, the power she had shown in the duel had been tremendous, but he had thought that it was only the performance of the Armored Cavalry, and that all he had to do was get it.

However, he had caught a glimpse of Kiriko's intimidation in the video. It hadn't been clear to him from the video, but now that Takuma had pointed it out, he realized what it meant and how scary it was. And now that he realized that Kiriko had the same kind of scent as Gyokuren, he felt that he should not underestimate her.

“I've seen Shinjyu at .....” At this point, Takuma took a deep breath to calm himself down.

“..... I will have to see you, but before I do, I would like to meet with either Sansui-sama, Rotsuka-sama, or Jitsuki-sama.”

“Are you thinking of forming a party with those people?”

“I turned it down. It's not in my nature and I don't want any trouble. The reason I want to see Sansui-sama and the others is because they are the only ones who have met Shinjyu-sama in

person. I have a feeling they have something important to tell me.” “The report came through Tsugisa-sama's subordinate, didn't it?”

“Oh, of course I looked it over, but it's pretty contrived. It's a bit bland, and the content seems to be quite biased. Then wouldn't it be natural to meet the source of the information, Sansui-sama?”

As Sansui and the others had predicted at the time, they didn't want to be looked down upon by the higher-ups, so they deleted a lot of information and sent a report that was tailored to suit their needs. After that, Jikki and his men suffered a rather ignominious defeat, and most of their subordinates, fearing a purge, defected to Recepshi, so the truth remained in the dark.

“We'll make arrangements as soon as possible.”

“And last but not least, Yamada Seina ....., who went missing in the duel. Please be extra careful with him.”

“Yamada Seina-sama, is it? Not the Godly Knight?”

“You know what? This is really important to keep in mind ... ... We tend to get caught up in our thinking about the trees. Wouldn't it be scary if they had a definite will? Think about what it means for Yamada Seina-sama to be a master. It's a terrible thing to treat that tremendous power, that high computing power, so insensitively, without considering the possibility that it could be directed at us.”

TAKUMA
“...Ahh, I do wonder... about him.”
Takuma muttered quietly, as if staring off into the far distance.
C-Could it be!
The appearance of Takuma dressed as a woman and his thoughtful expression. His older sisters and the two secretaries became engrossed in their own suspicious and rotten fantasies.
真·天地無用!/髑皇鬼外伝
天地無用!GXP-17 簾座編
TENCHI·MUYO!GXP-17

“It's ... That's ... ... sure it is, but ... ...”

“And he himself is the man chosen to be its master ... ... It's worth noting.”

“Is that another one of Takuma-sama's hunches?”

“..... Oh, I'm ..... curious about him.” Takuma muttered to himself as he stared off into the distance.

(Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.)

Takuma's appearance and pensive expression while dressed as a woman. The representative recognized exactly what Takuma intended to do, but the three sisters and secretaries were all lost in their own

suspicious, rotten fantasies. They were the daughters of the old woman who had the slanted thinking that Takuma had feared.

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It was a meadow with colorful flowers blooming all the way to the horizon, with gentle sunlight and a pleasant breeze blowing. In the middle of the field, five men were sitting in a circle, enjoying food and tea packed in a cylindrical box, as if they were having a picnic. Their posture was relaxed, but not sloppy. They looked noble and elegant.

“It's an interesting situation.”

There was gentle laughter from Ichiki Tenma Kihaku.

“Huh! Those idiots are such a disgrace!”

Grumpily eating his food was Ichika Rengoku Kasen, a monk-like figure, who was Shien’s (Karen) father. “I'm not sure what you're talking about,” he said. “He's the first to protect the squires' family, so he's still taking good care of them. But why don't you turn that kindness toward your brothers and sisters?”

The one drinking tea and chuckling was Shuren Luge Kaou. He was a cousin of Souren. “That's good! It's good medicine for them.”

“Well, as long as those overprotective matrons are attached to them. But they were pretty good dewdrops, so I wish they would have tried a little harder.”

The one who smilingly spit out his venom was Shuichi Kenma Magiyoku. “Dewdrops? ... ... You're a pretty bad guy, too.”

“I'm grateful and I'm sorry to see you go. After all, you and your mother had to deal with your younger brothers and sisters in order to keep the second place.”

“Why is it like this, Magiyoku?”

“I'm a pretty little thing compared to Shinjyu-sama (Gyokuren).”

“Those who stand ..... on top do not need to be dark.”

Watching their exchange silently, the leader of this party, Issui Renka Suirei, spoke gravely. “It would be a good time for my brothers, who have been pushing themselves too hard. I can only hope that my younger brothers will rise to the occasion.”

“The competition for the heir is getting tougher, and Issui is being tough on us too ... ... So? In order to survive the intensifying competition, you still want to protect the woman who ended the political lives of her younger brothers?”

“We welcome Yamada Seina to our party.”

Whoa, whoa, whoa!”

Three people other than Shuichi looked at Issui's statement in surprise.

“..... perhaps I'm out of order?”

Originally, their party consisted of one person from each kingdom, so the maximum number of members was five. If they were to include one person, it would mean that the lowest ranking person, Shuichi, would be excluded.

“Nothing requires the party to have five members.”

“Oh? ... Is that for the future? That's a pretty bold idea, but isn't it a bit premature to use it as a window to the Galactic Federation?”

“In the first place, letting Yamada Seina into the party is the same as breaking the tradition of the five families and monopolizing the contact point with the Federation. Do you think the people in the House of Lords would approve of that?”

“At least Kaou and Masui will approve.”

Although Kaou was no longer a kingdom, the power of the old king's family, the Ren family, was still strong. With Souren and Shuren, who was a member of this party, and one other supporter, there was a good chance that the party would be approved. Shinjyu (Gyokuren) was the Queen of Masui, and if Seina agreed to join the party, she was likely to support it. Of course, things were still in flux at this point, but it was not impossible.

“I see. But we don't know where this Yamada Seina is, or even if he's alive. And I'm sure that his Godly Knight and other people with various agendas are already after him. How to outsmart them is also a problem.”

“Let it go for a while. We'll solidify the ground while all eyes are on them. The battle, whatever it is, can't be sustained without the logistics underpinning it.”

“That's true, but wouldn't it be bad if they could hold Yamada Seina?”

“We can take him away when it happens. It was Shien (Karen) and the others that brought him here in the first place.

“Oh, that's what you mean. Shirohana's (Hakuren) father is an adopted son and has no party affiliation, and Shinjyu-dono (Gyokuren) is the current head of the family, but her political base is weak. If she were to become the leader, she would probably withdraw from the political scene at that point, and most of the heads of the Magiyoku are not interested in politics. I'm sure they will appoint Shuichi as their representative. As for the competition at this stage, it's Minamo's (Suiren) father ... ...”

“It will be a long time before Yamada Seina will have that much political value. The current leaders are ready to wait and see, and if there is going to be a problem, it will be with whom Shirohana (Hakuren) and Minamo (Suiren) marry.”

The one who had the greatest influence over Shien’s (Karen) marriage partner was her father, Ichika. In other words, whoever married Shien (Karen) was automatically declaring their support for his party. “But I don't do it for political purposes. I want that girl to be with someone she really loves.”

“I don't think you need to worry about that since she's the one who went over there with the Witch Queen in addition to Shirohana (Hakuren) and the others, but ..... she's been Yamada Seina's companion for a long time, so I'm not surprised she's a fan.”

“That kid, if he does anything indecent before marriage, I'll kill him!”

“As long as that outstanding woman is my wife, you don't have to worry about that.”

“Hmm? ..... Oh, I see. That one certainly looks serious.”

The fire, which had been raging all at once due to Shuichi's agitation, was easily extinguished by a word from Issui.

“Hey, Issui ... ... just when I thought we were going to see more of Ichika’s idiotic parenting, it gets cut short?”

“My beloved daughter, who has finally returned home safely, is now in isolation at her grandmother's. I don't want her to get into trouble if she gets out of control. Shouldn't you be protecting Yamada Seina? Most of the people who are looking for him are probably looking for the Godly Knight. There's a good chance they'll use forceful methods to get it.”

“Few know the truth about the Armored Cavalry and its master. The unwary will be badly burned, and the prudent will reap the fruits.”

“So, we're going to take the fruits of his labor? But will there be a price to pay, or will you have to take on some troublesome ties?”

“It's trivial. What is important is what Shirohana (Hakuren) and the others brought Yamada Seina for.”

“Defeating pirates, right? Yeah, you can't just focus on the immediate future if you want to achieve that.”

Within the Galactic Federation, Seina was the “hero” who was going to defeat the Demon King. But that was because it was more convenient for the Galactic Federation, or rather for Airi and Seto. In the first place, Seina's role was that of a decoy, but it was a role in which he could never play a leading role.

However, in Renza, it was possible to use him as a decoy. It was a trump card for defeating pirates, but this time, instead of using the hero, it was the hero's weapon, the holy sword.

“Yamada Seina's duel showed us that the pirates are much larger than we expected. There is no doubt that they are aiding the pirates. And it appears that the number of collaborators on the Renza side are also larger than we thought.”

“The darkness seems deep. On the other hand, it's easy to find the enemy's logistics, isn't it?”

“Hmm, it's impossible for an individual to maintain a Heavenly Knight class Armored Cavalry. If it's on a large scale, it's not impossible to trace its distribution.”

Especially for the Aquius Knight Class and above, which were becoming more and more popular. The Armored Cavalry was made up of many parts that required specialized knowledge and were more complex than ships. Even if an ordinary factory could make the parts, it was impossible to assemble and adjust them.

“That's right. It doesn't matter how widely dispersed the pirates are, we just have to find their roots.”

“What are the chances that it's the Galactic Federation?”

“Considering the fact that there was a large pirate organization on the other side, it's unlikely. Of course, that doesn't mean there aren't any, so we have to be careful.”

“However, Yamada Seina and his team will not be able to take on the pirates alone. It is necessary to gather competent Armored Cavalrymen. We need to gather talented people who have been driven away by the power-driven fools.”

“I'm sure you'll be happy to know that I'm not the only one who can help you. But is that okay? You might end up with a new hero, you know?”

“But heroes only shine in turbulent times.”

“The important thing is what happens after that ... ... I see. In the end, it all comes down to strengthening the ground.”

In the end, if the brave man does not marry the princess, he will just be a man.

“Good. Then let's go with that policy.”

They all nodded in agreement. At that moment, with the sound of an urgent call, the video monitors from each of their subordinates were activated in front of them.

“..... boohoo!”

Everyone who saw it, including Issui, fell down on the spot and started laughing.

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It was a huge, dimly lit, dome-shaped hall with a ceiling nearly eighty meters high. The extravagant decorations were faintly visible. However, the only place where people were actually present was a semicircle of about forty meters. The ceiling and the room in front of it, without walls, seemed to stand alone in the huge dome.

In the center of the room, a little to the rear of the room, there was a luxurious pavilion-style seating area made of intricately carved and intricately decorated stones. In front of the seats were wide sofa like seats that could comfortably seat about twenty people, made of velvety cloth, embroidered with silver and gold threads, and the framework was also decorated with intricate carvings and gilding.

It was large enough to hold several thousand people, but there were less than ten people in it. There seemed to be about four people in the dignitary's seats, but their silhouettes could not be discerned at all because of the finely woven lace. In the front seats, there were three people. One of them was a butler-like man, and the two slightly out-of-place people on the sofa seemed to be invited guests.

What the audience were seeing was a video of Seina, Kiriko and the others from before the duel, projected outside the room in a huge hall.

“.....”

One was a young woman of high school age, with straight dark red hair, wearing a t-shirt, a long sleeveless cardigan, saggy pants that looked like hakama, and sandals. She was a beautiful and fearless girl, but she was drinking tea and eating baked goods similar to rice crackers and staring at the video with half-lidded eyes.

“..... kkk.”

The man next to her was in his forties, with a shaggy head and a scraggly beard, and the appearance of a wild samurai. He was dressed like a hippy from the Showa era, smiling, lying barefoot on the sofa, and eating a huge piece of cake from the table with his hands. Occasionally, he tried to wipe his cream stained hands on the sofa, and the butler quickly offered him a wet towel.

“..... kkk.”

Renza also used folding fans, and the nobleman was using it as a simple gesture of intention. The hands of the person in the noble's seat trembled at the man's insolence, and occasionally the large fan in his hand would close with a snap.

“……Kukuku.”

The sound must have reached the man's ears, but he didn't seem to mind at all, and neither did the girl next to him.

“How about .....?” The butler asked fearfully as the video finished.

The man poked the girl next to him on the shoulder with his bare foot.

“Yes, it is. This one's sword, it's definitely from the battlefield.”

The girl's doll-like expressionlessness remained intact, but in a cool, interested voice she began to speak. “Sword of War, sir?”

“It's not one-on-one like a duel, it's specifically for mixed or many-on-one fighting. In other words, a four-on-one situation is the intention of the other side.”

“Oh, so you mean to say that this is the result of the enemy's cowardly trickery!”

The butler was indignant, and you could hear the fan snapping from the dignitary's seat.

“.....”

Even if it was a ruse by the other side, they were outnumbered and outgunned, the result of not knowing their own strength and simply relying on the advantage of numbers. The girl's face was expressionless, but out of sight of the butler, she smiled with her mouth only, as if she were making fun of them. And again, the man poked the girl as if to urge her onward.

“Seeing how her Armored Cavalry moved much better later on in the game, I'm guessing that the provocation by taking the heads and weapons was an act of familiarization training for her Armored Cavalry.”

“Fuck! What shamelessness! I didn't know the Federation's countrymen were so savage!”

At that moment, there was the sound of a fan being beaten. The butler turned to him and bowed, and then turned to the girl again.

Will you be able to defeat him?”

“We can win.” The girl answered the butler's question confidently, and the next moment, “Fuggah!”

The man next to her lightly kicked the girl, and she went straight into the wall, knocking over the artwork.

“.....”

The butler and the dignitaries could only stare in horror at the event and the sheer force of the crash.

“Father!” However, the girl quickly stood up, breaking down the wall she was stuck in, and rushed over to the man. Her hair was a mess, and her clothes were covered with dust, though she would normally have been hurt quite badly.

“If you're going to kick me, you'd better wipe those dirty feet first!”

(It was okay to kick!) The butler and those in the dignitary's seat shouted in their minds at the same time, but the girl began to wipe the man's feet with a wet towel handed to her by the butler.

“How can we win, you idiot? You're not even an Armored Cavalry pilot, how are you going to fight?”

“I can't lose a sword fight! Kyan!”

Once again, the girl was kicked in the face by the man and flew into the wall a little farther away from where she landed before. Of course, she immediately jumped up and ran back to the man. In other words, if you gave the wrong answer, you got kicked, which seemed to be the educational instructional scene of these parents and their children.

“How are you going to get into a fight, you idiot? They have no reason or advantage to fight you, you idiot.”

“Then I’ll force him! Kyan!”

“Kukkuku. How can a man known as the Sword Saint, the Sword King, and even the Sword Demon be afraid of a single woman?” A woman's mocking voice could be heard from the dignitary's seat.

The man's name was Nagiun Yotsura. And his daughter was Shunka. Both were well known mercenaries.

“Isn't your young daughter more worthy of the name Sword King?”

“Kusukusu, exactly, yes?”

“Hmm. You have enough guts to become an armored knight.”

Her tone was elegant, but her voice was happy, as if to make up for her patience. The images shown to Nagiun and the others were the most humiliating images they had ever seen. They were annoyed at the way she had ridiculed them, and the way she had made fun of them.

“You hear that, Father? It's all in the eye of the beholder, Kyan!” Instantly, Shunka slammed into the wall.

“Don't make me laugh! You don't have the will or even the power to do that anymore, you're just a bunch of third-rate frauds who are trying to fool idiots and kids with empty testimonies.” The man known as the Sword Demon lay down and lightly waved his arm.

Boom! A gust of wind rushed through the hall, and the butler's body was blown in half. But all that was scattered from the butler's body was yellow liquid, carbon fiber fragments, and special gel. The roar of the crowd was drowned out, but a few screams could be heard. The pillars and roof of the dignitary's seat in the back were also blown off.

A moment later, about two dozen Hall Guardians appeared with a rumbling alarm. After seeing Kiriko's battle, she had assured them that they could win the fight, and she proceeded to slash through them and throw them away with no hands.

“You don't have any credibility if you've been using your kids' status to repeatedly beat them up.”

The man quickly rose amidst the commotion and walked over to the collapsed guest of honor's table. There, four elderly women were huddled together, staring at Nagiun. They were the mothers of the second horsemen who had been defeated by Kiriko in the duel.

“Hold back, you bastard! You mess with us and you'll get what's coming to you.”

“Kakka! I don't trust people who do bad things behind my back. How many bioroids and guardians ..... know you're here?”

“Even if they do, they won't be safe! If you can get rid of the Galactic Federation woman, you can be forgiven for your rudeness.”

“Ha ha ha! There are a lot of people who would love to see you dead. Your family and the dueling ethics guys think you're a good scapegoat.”

“Bullshit!” The women's faces contorted.

“I've got a lot on my mind,” he said. “This is the result of me getting carried away and making too many enemies.”

“Oh? Would your father, who was in a similar situation, say that to someone?”

After sending one of the Guardians into the wall, Shunka butted into her father's comment. Nagiun was the same way when it comes to making enemies.

“You can't even defend yourself,” he said. “Your sons are not bad, but they fall down because you make them too tall.”

“How dare your father lecture people about disciplining their children? Is it perhaps a gag?”

Shunka smashed the guardian with a dumbfounded look. Even at a high level, dealing with thugs indoors or Guardians was a one-sided job for her.

“Shut up, you brainless idiot! I'm sure everyone who has known you since you were a kid has tearfully praised you for making it this far! ... Anyway. Your family is already working on the next one and they don't want you to waste any more money.”

Nagiun raised his left hand with a swoop. One flash of his hand blade and the fate of the girls would be over.

“Bastard!” ”Bastard!” ”By your own hand!” ”You bastard!” ”You bastard!”

“No!” ”No! No!” ”I don't want to die!” ”Stop!” ”Help me!”

Those who stared at Nagiun. Those who begged for their lives. It was the pity of those who had fallen from power.

“I'll make it easy for you. .....?”

As Nagiun said this with a blank expression, a lively tune began to play in the hall. He stopped his hand, and Shunka was on the lookout for the area while smashing the last Guardian.

“.....? What?”

At that moment, the ladies in front of Nagiun saw something strange. But they didn't try to run away from Nagiun, nor did they try to fight back.

“.....”? ”What?” ”My hand just did it.” ”My body!” ”My body!”

To his surprise, the girls started dancing to the tune of “Tankobushi” at a lively tempo. In other words, they were “hooked” by the video material mentioned earlier.

“... Boo!”

Nagiun, who had been watching with a wary expression, suddenly burst into a fit of giggles. He couldn't take it anymore and started laughing hysterically. “Bwahahahahahaha!”

He fell to the floor rolling around and laughing hysterically. The man who was called the Sword Saint, the King of Swords, and the Sword Demon had a sweet tooth and a great sense of humor.

“Stop it!” ”Stop it!”

“..... Well, well, well, sisters. It looks like you're really enjoying yourselves.”

After defeating all the Guardians, Shunka stood next to her father who was laughing and waved to the ladies with a blank expression.

“Hey, little girl!” ”Don't look at me!” ”Don't look!” ”Please!”

“I forgive your rudeness!” ”I'll give you as much money as you want!” ”I'll get you and your father out of here!”“

The women's faces were red with shame as they danced along to the lively music.

“I see. Then, since I seem to be interrupting, I'll leave you to it.”

“Yes, yes!” ”Hurry up and leave. Don't be shy!”

“Get the hell out of here before we change our minds!”

“Yes, yes, yes. Now, before we go, let's take a photo. .....”

Blinking, Shunka placed a photographic probe on her shoulder, wondering where she had gotten it from.

“You!” ”I don't know where you got that!” ”What are you going to do with it?”

“Ladies, have fun dancing, now?”

In other words, they’re going to put that footage on the Internet.

“Stop it!” ”Stop! Stop!” ”Stop it! Stop it!” ”Stop it!”

“Your expression is so stiff. Come on, smile and laugh more.”

The lines were harmonious, but the blinking faces remained expressionless.

“Such an embarrassment. ..... Damn it, kill me!” ”Kill me!”

Screams, shouts, and laughter echoed through the hall for a while.

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“Please check it out.”

It was a place that looked like a corner of a lounge. It was only about ten tatami mats in size, but with a comfortable sofa, ornamental plants, and indirect lighting behind the lattice-like walls, it didn't feel small.

The monitor in front of Nagiun and the others showed works of art and jewelry, each with a detailed history of the item and its price. In other words, this was a place like a pawn shop that dealt in luxury goods, and the items being appraised were those that had just been on display in the hall where the mother of the second group of riders was located. Naturally, taking something without permission was considered theft, but in the eyes of Nagiun and company, it was a “courtesy payment” and a fair compensation for being called in and consulted. It was not a fireplace burglary or anything like that.

“All right. Half to the designated account, half to cash. All in gold beans, please.”

“Thank you.”

The next moment, Nagiun saw ten cases of small coins, called gold beans, about one centimeter in diameter, in front of him, and a monitor showing the payment activated in front of him.

“If you hadn't missed them, we would have gotten ten times as much.” Shunka was referring to the jewelry that those women were wearing.

“Don't worry. I'm not going to kill them after seeing them like that. What are you going to do with the footage you took?”

“I thought I'd share the fun with the world.”

“..... Maybe I should have interceded.”

When Nagiun heard this, he covered his eyes with his hands and looked up to the heavens. It was a real suicide to be seen by Nagiun and the others, and to be exposed to the whole of Renza.

“Then they might still be dancing, so let's go back now!”

“What an idiot. If I had posted that kind of footage, it would have been removed by now. I'm sure you're the one who's going to get in trouble.”

“It's all right. My father and I have uploaded the file in our joint names.”

“What the hell?”

“Your father told me to do that whenever I did something because he wanted the advertising money, right?”

“Crap! That was .....”

“What business is it of yours to have a grudge or two now, Father?”

A boomerang indeed. Nagiun breathed a big sigh when he saw his daughter laughing at him.

“..... It's time for you to leave me. You're strong enough to live on your own, and you have disciples to support you. You could even become an armored knight if you leave me. I'm not interested in that, and no one is crazy enough to want to take me on for all the trouble now. But if you are, you can go to .....”

“Father, ...”

As Nagiun spoke somberly and seriously, Shunka's expression changed. However, he immediately glared at her with a grim look on his face.

“..... So? What are you trying to do by getting rid of me?”

“What do you mean, I’m worried about your future ...?”

“No! At times like this, you are often plotting to do something fun behind my back! If you don't tell me honestly, I'll refuse to accompany you to the Spring Sweets Festival at Armelite. Please go alone.”

“Oh! What the hell! That's the price you pay for taking me to this job!”

He was unpredictable and unrestrained. Nagiun may have been known as the Demon of the Sword but he didn't act that way to everyone. Like most fathers, he had a strong dislike for crying children and groups of young women.

“It's a small price to pay for missing out on those old farts and reducing my income! I'm the one who went up against the wall to collect the money in the first place! In a case like this, I think 80% of the money should be my share, not 50-50.”

“Damn! ..... Oh, you cowardly ... ...”

“Hmph. It was my father who taught me not to hesitate to use any dirty trick to achieve my goal.”

Nagiun, who stared at her while grinding his teeth, was so powerful that a normal human being would have shat his pants if he were to come face to face with him. But Shunka was either used to it or insensitive and didn't care. However, “.....? Did I tell you that?”

“What?” When she was asked that, she tilted her head and clapped her hands.

“Oh, that was my mother's teaching.”

Shunka's mother, a woman who said, “If you suspect something, cut it out” and “If you're wrong, run away,” was a mercenary who specialized in defeating pirates. By the way, she was not married to Nagiun.

“I told you to check with me if they taught me anything because they're dumber than you!”

“Ha-ha-ha. But it seems to have helped this time?”

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Nagiun and Shunka came to a space colony connected by an orbital elevator to the satellite orbit of the planet where the hall that caused the commotion was located. The space colony also had a spaceport, which was the gateway to space, a format used on many of the planets in Renza. One of the branches of the sweet store “Armelite” that Nagiun wanted to visit was located in a commercial facility there.

“So, would you mind telling me why you're here?”

Armelite was the largest sweets company in the world, with stores all over the city, and was originally opened by the royal family's pastry chefs. In addition to a common menu for all stores, each store had its own special menu, and the biggest selling point was that they were allowed to

sell special sweets that were served at each royal family's dinner. There were even aristocrats and wealthy people who traveled around to eat these sweets.

And of course, the main clientele here were women, with only a few men who looked like they were on dates. The rather large store was packed, and it felt like they were in the cafeteria of a women's college.

“Hmm? Yeah, I was actually hoping to meet Yamada Seina.”

Nagiun was happily eating the cakes lined up on the tower stand. This was the secret recipe of the Kaou royal family, a menu inspired by spring, with a variety of confectionery materials crafted into flowers.

“Yamada Seina? I've seen the battle footage, and you don't look like you're capable of doing what your father cares about.”

Nagiun heard the answer and silently placed one of the cakes on a small plate and offered it to Shunka.

“Ugh!”

In an instant, Shunka's complexion turned pale. She had a huge weakness for sweets, just like her father.

Shunka poured all of the unsweetened tea in the pitcher and finally stuffed the cake into her mouth. Then she held her nose and tried hard not to smell the burp.

Of course, the sweet smell of cake filled the air around her, but she couldn't stand the smell of it coming from inside her own stomach. But this was an educational lesson, not payback for what she had just done.

“..... You know the term 'probability bias' too, don't you?”

“Well, that's because, of course ..... most mercenaries care about good luck and bad luck.”

For those who engaged in battle, the element of luck, which was beyond one's control, was an object of fear. Many mercenaries were superstitious and believed in charms and jinxes.

“Yamada Seina attracts pirates because of his 'probability bias'. That's also the reason why the royal ladies who went over there brought him to Renza.”

“Is that what it's all about?”

The paperwork submitted for the formation of the pirate strike force had figures on the bias of Yamada Seina's odds.

Nagiun was actually quite intelligent. Due to his upbringing, he entered school quite late, and although it was all correspondence courses, he was able to complete the basic curriculum in between jobs, and eventually completed a course at a top university.

“You said it was pretty high?

“..... I was eight years old when I picked up a real sword, and I slayed a living creature that very day. And at ten I slayed a man, and at twelve I went into battle.”

‘I was about that high, but what does that have to do with anything?”

“The most troublesome part of warfare is the destruction of an encircling army and the retreat of a retreating army. Well, consider that Yamada Seina's ‘probability bias’ is like being in the same situation as both of these.”

“Well, it's ... nasty, but ...” She still didn't seem to realize how abnormal it was.

“That's from the moment you're born with an ogre, all hours of the day, you know?”

“That ..... is ..... also .....”

The moment she said that the expression on her face was that of a happy demon, and it was obvious that she had a strange air about her. It was so out of place that even an ordinary person who was not familiar with such signs would have felt a chill. Naturally, this was communicated to the women in the vicinity, and some of them even tried to flee the scene in a panic, their faces twitching, but the next moment, the presence dissipated like a lie.

“??”

Although she wondered at the suddenness of the situation, she soon regained her composure, which was due to the general lack of sense of danger. It was the two slices of cake that were placed in front of her that instantly dispersed the thick murderous spirit of Shunka.

“.....”

As Shunka looked at him with twinkling eyes, Nagiun heartlessly shook his head in a small gesture.

“That's why I want to see what this Yamada Seina guy is like.”

“..... I see. That's someone I'd really like to slay.”

There were several empty pitchers lying in front of Shunka, who was blue and teary-eyed and looked as if she was about to rebel. The scene resembled a table full of businessmen who had come to a beer garden.

“Listen to what people are saying. I said I want to see it.”

“So, you'll leave me to slay Yamada Seina?” Shunka, who was on the verge of a breakdown after eating a total of three pieces of cake that she hated, grinned. But unlike the last time, she didn't release a killing intent.

“That's why I'm telling you not to slash ..... haha, forget it. Instead, keep your neck barrel properly maintained.”

“Of course. Hmmm... ... Oh, so what do you do after you slay Yamada Seina? Yes, yes. I know my father won't think twice about sending me away because of this. If you misbehave again, I will inform my disciples to refuse to buy or receive mail orders.”

“What the hell?”

Nagiun immediately gave up and held up two fingers. It meant that he wanted her to order two tower stands of cake, and that was the moment he gave in to his daughter's threat.

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“..... So, what do you think of that princess's technique?”

“Yes, it is. For that age, I think it's okay ...” Shunka gulped at the cake that was slowly being presented to her. If she answered incorrectly, she would have to eat it again. Her body began to tremble slightly.

“It's a bit like your father's, ... but more refined, ... less lean.”

And the cake, which was being placed in front of Shunka, was quickly removed and placed in Nagiun's mouth. Shunka heaved a big, sweaty sigh of relief.

“It's definitely a skill that's been honed and passed down over the years.”

“Damn! Does that mean there are more masters on the other side than that princess?” In other words, that was what Nagiun, her father, wanted.

“That's right. If that princess is at that level at her young age, there must be a lot of monsters over there.”

“It's also ..... kuku kuku. I'm very, very excited.”

A father and daughter with two scary smiles on their faces. It was inappropriate for the occasion, and in fact, it stood out so much that the female customers were turned off by it, but Shunka was insensitive by nature, and Nagiun was absorbed in the cake, so it didn't matter.

Chapter Three: The Will of the Wise

“..... I bet you could be the king of gluttony now.”

On the second floor of Barigaru's house in the uptown area of the old capital of a certain continent on the planet Abaryum, Seina was eating a large meal under the light of a small magical crystal lamp. The armored door and thick curtains were closed to prevent the light from leaking outside.

The formation of the magic organ during the magical cold and the energy consumption used for it was so great that Seina's body was just skin and bones. His body, judging that his life was in danger, asked for food day and night, in almost two-hour rotations. He was like a newborn baby.

“Thanks for the food. Sorry to bother you at this time of night.”

“No, I don't need a lot of sleep, just about fifteen minutes at a time, split up over several nights.”

Serving Seina was a lovely looking Kobold. Its slender back looked like a woman with long hair. Although it was a demon, it was easily accustomed to people and was treated as a subspecies or half-breed in some areas.

“I was surprised when ..... you appeared as me.”

× × ×

“Oh, me?”

Seina appeared in front of Seina when Barigaru called him. The only thing was that he was wearing this style of clothing on his normal body before he became thin.

“Holy shit, is that .....?”

“Ha-ha-ha! Are you surprised? Hey, Nana, that's enough.”

“Yes, Master.”

And just as the space began to shimmer, Seina's figure transformed into that of a pure white fox or marten-like animal walking on two legs.

“This is a Kun Kobold. He's a subspecies of Kobold. He's my familiar.”

“Familiar?”

His slender figure was about the size of a young elementary school student, and if he were as tall as an adult, he would look like a beautiful, foxy beast of a boy.

“It's quite a lovely messenger.”

“Ga-ha-ha! That's right, that's right. He's a male, by the way, so don't let the fact that he's cute put you off. I'm sure you'll be happy to know that I'm not the only one who's a bit of a jerk. If

you're one of them, I'll immediately send you to the Potions Guild and sacrifice you to the talented pervert."

"I don't have that kind of taste, so there's no problem."

Barigaru glared at Seina with the kind of look he would give to a man who has come to marry his beloved daughter.

"But the shape-shifting ability is amazing."

"Oh, that's the artifact magic of change that Nana has. It's not a shapeshifter, but it contains magic that misleads the sight and touch of others. It's also a part of your debt, but don't worry, it will be his."

"Wow ..... you've got an artifact item ..... and you were disguised as me, maybe as cover?"

"Yeah, so we can pretend that your sickness was short-lived. He's been wandering around town in your form for about two weeks, so I'm sure you'll be recognized, especially by those in the customer service business. When your body recovers to the point where it is comfortable, you will be given a lecture on how to travel so that you can successfully switch places with Nana."

Following Barigaru's words, Nana stepped forward and bowed with a soft gesture, but surprisingly firm words. "I will take care of you from now on, so if there is anything you need, please do not hesitate to ask."

"It's nice to meet you. ..... Then again, you're not all that different from people, are you? Or are these Kun Kobolds a particularly clever species?"

"No, it's not normally this intelligent. It's another piece of technology I developed in college using magic crystals. It's a kind of auxiliary brain, linked to the main body to make it as intelligent as a human. Even if Nana dies for some reason, another individual can have the same intelligence and memories if they are linked to him. Well, the personality depends on the body, so it can't be said to be exactly the same.

"That far ....."

Hearing of a laboratory animal with such a high level of intelligence reminded Seina of the time when Fuku was captured by Tarrant, and he felt a little disgusted. He wondered what Nana would think about it.

"There are many pros and cons to this, but it takes time to find and train the right person to be a messenger. And they can only do simple tasks. Of course, if you use magic as a link, you can give complex instructions, but that places a heavy burden on the demon. If you don't let them get used to it, they could reject it, and if you're not good at it, they will be disposable for the moment. But with this technology, as you can see, after a short period of training, the load on the demon is almost unrecognizable."

“I will be the seventh user for the Master. All of my predecessors in the auxiliary's records seem to have been fond of the Master. Of course, so am I.” The smile on his face was not out of place. In a way, this may be in line with the original habit of the Kun Kobold species.

“Seventh generation?”

“I started out with smaller, shorter-lived demons. I've been doing this for about 25 years, so far.

*** * * Editors’ note: <> indicates Seina, [] is for Nayuta and ** is for the being that is the source of all magic. There is no name for the magic source. I think that she is the unidentified girl in pinup 3 of GXP 14. * * ***

“....., Philosopher's Stone?”

[I'm a more advanced intelligence. How dare you call yourself a sage when you're at such an early stage, like a baby!] The voice that suddenly shouted was the Philosopher's Stone installed in Seina.

<Shut up for a second. We'll talk later.>

“Gahahaha! I know it's a bit of a big name myself, but does it sound familiar?” Barigaru asked, misunderstanding Seina's condition.

“Well, you know, I've heard similar names in stories and stuff.”

“Yes, that’s right. You heard about it before. Well, it's a common name, considering its function.”

× × ×

“I could have lifted my disguise when I entered the house, but Master said he wanted to see Seina-sama's surprise.”

The way he smiled mischievously was so adorable that Seina could almost forgive him a little bit, and he could see why the talented pervert Barigaru knew would want Nana to dress up as a woman.

“Well, I'm glad you're enjoying .....”

“I apologize for being such a childish master.”

“I've known people like that. And it was interesting to see something so rare right in front of my eyes.”

“Cousin. I appreciate you saying that.”

The way he tilted his head was really adorable. If you took them to Japan, they would surely to be very popular with some enthusiasts. And like that talented pervert, Seina wondered if Tsukiko-san would hit her for trying to make him wear a skirt?

[Correct.]

“I'll be waiting in the next room, so please don't hesitate to call me.” Nana put the entire meal in his magic bag, bowed gracefully, and left.

[I'm sure the maid's uniform suits you very well.]

<Because I'm male. She’s not even a man's daughter.>

[But I hate that guy.]

<Don't be sulky just because you have the same name. You're the same kind of beings to begin with, and you're a much higher-ranking being, aren't you?>

[I hate the fact that you think I'm cute.]

<The meaning of “cute” is quite different from yours. ..... Please stay back for a while.>

[Oh, it's the usual tokoroten. So, I'll stay back, while you go out?]

*** * * Editor’s note: Tokoroten is a type of clear gel noodle. Often served with vinegar and sesame seeds. * * ***

<Don't use food as an analogy.> Seina quickly ran upstairs to the bathroom, which was already a pleasant —— experience. <Then again, ... I’ve been through a lot of weird stuff. .....>

The current situation was problematic in many ways, but the change in the Philosopher's Stone was also an issue. It was only after the first introduction of Nana that Seina was able to have a detailed discussion with the Philosopher's Stone.

× × ×

“Master, he's only just awakened. Besides, your meeting with Herrera is about to begin.”

“Oh, is it that time already? Anyway, I'm going to leave Nana here, so you can get some more rest. ..... I mean, I'm sure you'll be hungry soon, so we'll have to eat first.”

He then stroked Nana's head with a good-natured expression, handed him the magic bag, and quickly left the room.

<Philosopher's Stone, what's the status?> Seina finished his meal, and after making sure Nana's presence had disappeared downstairs, he spoke to her to try to follow up.

[Barigaru doesn't seem to be a bad guy, but it’s also dangerous to believe everything he says. As long as we can't ask for help from anywhere, we should get accurate information from other sources. In addition, the fact that we are under the influence of magical elements, which are incompatible with science and technology, is another cause for concern.]

<There's no contradiction in Barigaru's explanation. He isolated me from my friends early on and took turns with that messenger named Nana to take proper care of me.>

[That’s true.] It was a relief.

But ..... <Hey, I know I asked for more conversation, but did you have to change the ..... audio?>

The voice of the Philosopher's Stone was originally that of a woman, clerical and stiff, but now, perhaps due to a change in the way she spoke, she now had a familiar, lustrous voice.

[Is that what you think of Tsukiko's voice? Of course, it's a temporary change. But if I'm going to go to ....., I want to adjust it to my beloved husband's taste.]

<..... My beloved ..... husband, you say?> He had said that he wanted her to speak in a friendly manner, but this was a statement that exceeded that limit. Seina felt a chill run down his spine as he felt a little bad. Of course, it wasn't because of the magic fever, and for some reason, there was an unpleasant sense of nostalgia.

[The name “Philosopher's Stone” doesn't sound good either. Having the same name is confusing, it's the same as being called 'human' or 'female'. Please leave it as {interim} for now. Also, since I'm going out of my way, I want to create an appearance.]

Something about the tone of the Philosopher's Stone {interim} began to take on emotion.

<..... Hold on! What's going on? Are you broken?> Could it be because of the magical element? Since the magical element was incompatible with technology, it was possible that it had affected the Philosopher's Stone {interim} and made it crazy. Seina was worried about that and how it might affect his Bio-Enhancement.

[Yes, ... I may indeed be broken. The original function of the Philosopher's Stone has been compromised, and I can no longer access Washu-sama's databank.]

<Whoa, hey! That's not good!>

[Yes, I'm having a few problems. First of all, I've lost my current location. This is partly due to the influence of magical elements and other factors, but the terrain data for ZINV and other basic data exist in my mind, although they are inaccessible. As soon as it's recovered, I can determine the location from the surrounding terrain, and Barigaru knows the place where Seina was rescued, so it's not a big problem. However, as I reported earlier, a large part of my detection function has been lost.>]

<Can you restore the function?> Seina was used to trouble, so he wasn’t too upset. For now, as long as he knew that he was not in danger, it was business as usual.

[I am only talking about the current stage. I am broken as an NB, but I have changed ..... into a different being, or perhaps I have evolved. As an installed NB, I have formed a separate personality from Seina's auxiliary device.]

<Is it an independent personality. Could it be that it's an astral program like Kirche and Miki?> If anything, that was more surprising.

[There is no way to tell here whether or not I have an astral. But the presence or absence of an astral is only an indicator of how others will treat me. At least I am aware of the existence of myself. The rest depends on what you think, Seina.]

<I think, therefore I am. Because of the problems I had with NB, ... I asked Washu for various things from a safety standpoint, though .....> Seina didn't want a dubious device like NB, but it seemed to have become more complicated than that.

[I am sure that this personality of mine is influenced in its composition by the people and actions that Seina-san has met and that have left a lasting impression on him. So, I'm sorry, but it is an irresistible force.]

<Well certainly, ... I guess we have no choice?>

Considering that coming to a world with magical elements was due to Seina's probability bias, it was not reasonable to blame the Philosopher's Stone {interim}. If personality development was influenced by what a child saw and heard during the process of growth, it was inevitable that Seto, Mikami, Airi and Airi and Airi and Airi and Airi (he said it according to the ratio of adverse effects) were having an influence there.

<Just when I thought I could finally say goodbye to Airi's strange NB, ..., is it because of the magical element that you were established as a personality in the first place?>

[That's certainly possible. But since we're here, let's start with my appearance. Is it okay if I use Tsukiko as the base?]

And then, suddenly, Tsukiko's image appeared in Seina's vision. The Philosopher's Stone {interim} was sending data directly to his visual cortex.

"Hey, hey. ....." He realized that he had said that out loud and quickly shut his mouth. Then he heard light footsteps coming from downstairs.

"Seina, what is it?" A worried Nana made a face.

"No, I was just thinking about something, and I said it out loud. I do that sometimes, so don't worry about it."

"Is that so? If you're not feeling comfortable, tell me." His smile was really adorable.

"Thank you. If there's anything I need, I'll let you know."

"Yes. Now if you'll excuse me."

The fact that Seina could barely hear his footsteps as he walked away made him think that he was in a hurry to get here because he was so worried about him, and he even felt mildly guilty. By the way, Nana's room was next to the one Seina was using.

[You're a man, but how cute! But Seina-chan, that's Barigaru's errand boy, so don't get any strange ideas.]

<Don't say that in Tsukiko's figure and voice! And don't imitate my tone of voice! I know you can pull out such functions and data!>

[Because that's already my top priority.]

<Roger that. I get it. You seem to have much better hearing than that, so you should be careful.>

It's not good if people think you're talking to someone else, and it was a problem if it was someone other than Nana or Barigaru. Of course, it was also a problem if people think you're a dangerous person mumbling to yourself.

<There are people sniffing around about me, and I have to be careful, so you'd better pull your weight. ..... So, what's with all the hustle and bustle and Tsukiko-san being the base?>

[It's only natural for me to want to be the ideal image of a woman, since I'm always seen up close like this, right?]

<No, even if you say it's natural, ...> The question was, why Tsukiko? Or maybe it was the subjective view of Washu, the creator of the Philosopher's Stone {interim}.

[I'm sorry. You don't want to be with your wife's mother? But in less than a hundred years, you'll be married to your fifth or sixth group of wives, right?]

<Don't talk about it like it's a series of toys! What's with those numbers?>

There were already four of them in the first round, Karen and the others were schedule for the second round, and Fuku-chan's group seemed to be a certainty. That brought him to the third installment. Seina was confused when he was told that there would be two or three more, as if it were a matter of course.

As for the marriage issue, he had given up thinking about it. Since Seina has been told to his face that it was a political marriage, he had no right to decide. And in the first place, marriage itself was out of his mind. The appearance of a woman who said that she would be willing to marry Seina would be a miracle, a situation that would make him doubt her sanity or confirm that it was a dream. So if she said so, there was no way that Seina could refuse.

[Ah, but yes, if I base my work on Tsukiko-san, I will feel somewhat defeated. If that is the case, it would be good to borrow Souren's figure, since the magical element and this world are the reason for my independence as an individual. The most important thing to remember is that the flower of fantasy is the elf, and the elf is a high elf. Don't you think so too, ... Seina?]

<Eh? .....Well, it's certainly the most fantasy-like, but .....Ugh!> The soft tone of her voice was not matched by her forcefulness, and Seina could not help but reply. But more than that, the image projected in his vision was the very Souren he saw up close, breathtakingly beautiful.

[Then let's incorporate Washu-sama's element into it. After all, she's my creator, my mother.] And then, her golden hair quickly changed to a dark red. The highlights of her slightly stiff, cat-like hair shone in rainbow colors like the surface of a CD, depending on how the light hit it, giving it a metallic texture. The facial structure was also changed to Washu's strong-willed structure while retaining Souren's beauty. Of course, the ears were still elf ears.

<.....>

What was happening in front of his eyes was just like a character makeover in a video game. The quality of the images was as good as or better than the personalized images of Kiriko and her friends that had been installed on NB. Seina could even feel a presence and aura that made it hard to believe that it was an image, and he couldn't help but watch in silence as he admired its divine beauty.

<Is this what your face looks like for now? Next is .....>

The Philosopher's Stone {interim} turned to Seina with a mischievous smile that was common to Airi and Washu. The only difference between it and Airi and Washu's is that he couldn't feel any evil in it. She was wearing a gown made of a thin fabric like those worn by ancient Greeks, but the silhouette of her body was faintly visible through it. Although her base was Souren, her slender body was neutral and could be taken as either male or female.

<What the hell?> Then her body, like her face, transformed into that of a woman with soft curves. It was just like the birth of Venus. The big problem here was that no matter how hard he tried to look away or close his eyes, he could still see the figure. It was fortunate that she was not naked, but even so, the weave of the gown, with its fine vertical lines, brought out the three-dimensionality of her body in a very vivid and sensational way. It showed a three-dimensionality more destructive than nudity.

This kind of provocation was Amane's and Gyokuren's specialty, but Amane had Kiriko to hold her in check, and Gyokuren had Karen coming to stop her right away. However, there was no Kiriko or Karen to rely on here. In other words, the only way to resist the limbs in front of him was his own not-so-strong will power. The only fortunate element was that she was not a real person.

[Oh my, Seina-san. Do you think I'm just an image?] The Philosopher's Stone {interim} quickly reached for Seina's right hand and grabbed it.

<..... What? I feel your hand!> Seina's right hand could properly feel the slightly cool but soft hand of the Philosopher's Stone {interim}. And as she pulled his hand closer, Seina's actual hand began to move to match the image.

[Ufufu. You don't seem to understand why I'm in Seina-san's life.]

<What?> Seina's right hand was guided by the Philosopher's Stone {interim} and pressed firmly against her breast, not her cleavage, but right at her heart. <Hey, Philosopher's Stone!>

It was better than being pressed against her breasts, but his hand was still positioned in the valley where he could feel the swell of both breasts. The soft feeling that came from this was unmistakably the same as the image in front of his eyes, and it was more than enough to make him feel a strong sensation. He tried his best to hold back the voice that was about to leak out.

[You can feel my heartbeat, can't you?]

Seina's hands could definitely feel the thumping of her heartbeat. Even though it was obviously based on data, the detailed tactile sensations of the fabric and body heat were very real. This was a good example of how virtual reality, when mastered, could be just like reality.

[Did you forget that Washu, my mother, is a philosopher? You can't be sure that the me you see before your eyes is just a virtual image, can you? It is possible for a man and a woman to have intercourse, and it is also possible for me to create a child by combining Seina's genetic information with mine. We can't do that here, but we can have a baby from your genetic information in a medical culture tank in Kamidake.]

<What's so special about ....., it's so powerful?>

[Well, since you're here, why don't you try .....?] The previously calm expression of the Philosopher's Stone {interim} twisted in embarrassment. Her eyes moistened and her cheeks flushed. It was a destructive force comparable to the real Gyokuren.

<Hey, wait a minute. ..... No, wait a minute! That's just too much, no matter what. In the first place, even if it is a male-female activity, the Philosopher's Stone is not here in real life, so if you look at it objectively, it would be a very dumb scene!>

The sex between a man and a woman was just an event in the brain, just like the virtual sex that Kenneth had in various ways was only real to him. In any case, if he didn't stop, his dignity and everything else would be shattered.

<It's too vain to think about what I have to do afterwards! No, no, before that, there's no excuse for Kiriko and the others, and this is someone else's house!>

To masturbate in a stranger's home was rude. He couldn’t complain even if he got kicked out as soon as he was caught. In addition, I have a delusional wife <?>. What would others think if they found out that he had sex with his imaginary wife <?>, the Philosopher's Stone {interim}, in his brain and had a child with her? In fact, if Kiriko found out about it, she was going to have to go to .....

[Indeed, objectively speaking, I'm the ultimate pain in the ass. But I'm certainly here to stay.]

<Why are you trying to do so much in the first place? Even if you're independent as an individual, isn't it a bit strange?> He couldn't understand how she could think of Seina so much as to show that he could even make a child. <Is that what you’re programmed to do?>

So many crazy things came to his mind. The previous generation NB had been too much, but now that the Philosopher's Stone had been installed in his body, there was no way for him to escape, and he could not let other people recognize his abnormal behavior.

[In the first place, I am here to help you, Seina. In order to serve you, I exist only for you. And I am a woman. Then the conclusion is obvious, isn't it?]

<Wait a minute! I'll admit that the first three are okay. But the last! Isn't it wrong to assume that you're a woman?>

[I don't like the taste of mechanical assistance. In fact, Seina-san requested me to speak normally. I understood that you at least wanted me to react as a person.]

<Isn't it okay if it's a man?>

[Do you prefer me to be a brainiac or a shota? Or do you want to make friends with your brain and think you're not a poseur?]

<My brain wife has all kinds of problems! My brain friend has more room for sympathy in this situation!>

[Mother said, “Kukuku. It's better for women to make announcements in the brain ♡”, so I set it that way, so it can't be helped. By the way, the ability of this part is not a function as NB, but an instinct, so it was well protected ♡.]

Perhaps it was a recording, or perhaps it was the power of the Philosopher's Stone {interim}, but the dialogue was in Washu's voice, which was a nice touch. Moreover, the extra function ....., or instinct, was also preserved in case of emergency, which was a joke.

<Shit! You’re just like Airi after all. Tenchi-senpai was right.>

To be precise, Washu plus Naja was the source of all this. Airi followed their traditions. He was following the ..... correction, that was his character and a natural consequence of self-responsibility! He was just born in a later time than Washu and the others. Seina knew that's what the Galaxy Academy philosophy department was all about, a place where likeminded people came together.

[Seina, you are the main reason why I became an individual so soon. My mother expected it to happen a little further down the road.]

<So, when you say that, ... did you expect to be an individual someday?>

[Seina-san's probability bias is too stimulating in many ways. It's truly checkered, with many stimuli to receive, and it's full of elements that can trigger an individual. Above all, the number of rare situations that an individual encounters that can be classified as peculiar is comparable to the amount gathered in the Galaxy Academy central database, so it's only natural that it would accelerate the growth of AI explosively.]

Seina couldn't help it, because in a person's lifetime, there were daily situations that could be bragged about to everyone that this was a terrific experience.

<Ch, but isn't there a little something called ..... dead weight? I mean, I feel like I'm jumping to conclusions too fast, or is that just my imagination?>

[For some reason, a high percentage of the women around Seina have never heard of dead weight, and those are the ones who do not avoid you, but rather favor you. Therefore, it is natural that my learning function actively learns and accumulates their behavior patterns. And then there is the establishment of the individual ..... In other words, “I think, therefore I am, but there is no word for self-restraint in my dictionary <lol>.]

<..... So, this is how it happened?>

[The environment in which one grows up in is very important.]

<Don't say that so solemnly. But you're absolutely right, though!> He wasn’t crying about being lost as he was about this situation.

[That and we are of one mind. Unlike other wives and potential wives, we are together at all times. Wouldn't it be better to love each other rather than bicker?]

<That's true, but ... ... No, no, no, wait a minute! Love each other is not the right word! You're an NB to begin with, you know. People are... >

“Don't say anything else,” Seina stopped speaking the last word unconsciously. However, his refusal was understood by his opponent.

[..... I see, is that so?] Suddenly, the tone of the Philosopher's Stone's voice plummeted, and her expression fell to the point where Seina felt a little uneasy.

[If ..... you really don't like ..... that I'm bothering you, the self-destruct function will leave the minimum ..... functions will be maintained.]

<What do you mean? You mean reset .....?>

[This would be the self-destruction of some auxiliary functions. If I, the individual, destroy and delete the functional part, only the minimum responsive functionality will remain as before. The data and functions that were inaccessible will soon be restored .....]

<What? ..... Then what about you?>

[I'm sorry for ..... I'm sorry I can't help you. ..... I'm sorry I can't help you. I'm sorry that I can't help you. I tried my best to be of use to you, and I studied a lot ... ... I’ve only been alive for 52 days, 10 hours, 22 minutes, and 35 seconds, so I'm still immature.]

And finally, the Philosopher's Stone {interim} began to cry. Seina was bewildered by this sudden change.

[Because Seina told me that I'm not needed ... for telling you there's no need for me, Seina.]

<I'm not saying you're not necessary. But talking about having a child is just … it's too sudden, right?>

At this point, the idea of her being NB had completely slipped Seina's mind. He had completely recognized the Philosopher's Stone {interim} as a living being.

[I thought that since big sis Fuku became Seina's bride, I would be like her, and I wanted to be like her ..... but I can't help you, can I?]

She was an adult in appearance, but her sad appearance, her crying, was like that of a child. Of course, Seina's intuition assured him that it was not a vicious ulterior motive & joke like Airi's. That's why he was confused.

<..... Oh, I see. That's what you're talking about.>

Even though it may be an adult in its abilities, the Philosopher's Stone was like a newborn baby when it was activated, or rather, when it was in its individual state. It had knowledge, but because it had little experience, it had no sense of what that knowledge was, and could not use it at its own will. And the fact that it had advanced abilities made things even more complicated.

<However, it's still not settled whether the pseudo-personality of a program is considered a human being or just a program.>

Only astral beings were legally entitled to human rights. This was due to the Academy's ability to create highly programmed personalities. There were many people who had transferred them to bodies and raising them normally for tens or hundreds of years. Although they did not have human rights, they were recognized as human beings by the people around them, and many of them blended into the lives of people. For this reason, they were registered as pseudo-personalities, and if their behavioral records were regularly reviewed and there were no problematic behaviors, the pseudo-personality was granted the right to exist and was treated like a person. If they intentionally harmed others, they were subject to the same penalties as people and were imprisoned.

<Which means it's very messy and complicated. .....>

[Sorry for the trouble ......]

<Ahh! You can read thoughts too.> Seina looked at the Philosopher's Stone {interim}, which was already cowering like a completely abandoned puppy, and breathed a big sigh. These extreme ups and downs were another sign of being young.

<Anyway, it was just a matter of what I thought.> In the end, it didn't matter if she was just a program or if she had an astral. It was a choice between killing her existence or not.

To be honest, Seina was confused. But at the same time, he was happy for her. There were a few ..... quite a few problems with the language ....., but that was just because the example used was a bad example. Although she had a sense of mission as an NB, she was embarrassed to declare herself a “bride” so straightforwardly based on her own idea, but she was also strangely happy to do so.

If he had stayed on earth, it would have been a fantasy or delusion for Seina to even think of dating a woman, let alone getting married in the future. Recently, however, the rate of women arriving and staying was soaring, and the ability to make sound judgments was lost at the stage of Kiriko and the others' political marriage. He could not grasp the figures anymore.

<I feel like I'm desperately trying to come up with an excuse to accept this. ..... If the political marriages continue in the future. .....>

Even if he had the option of refusing, he really had no reason not to accept her. After all, she was the “thing” created for Seina, the “person” who could be called Fuku's sister. Anyway, he could educate her properly in the future, and it was his duty to do so.

<I understand. You don't have to destroy yourself. Whether or not you have astral is not important. I can't kill the ego that has just sprouted.>

[I'm so happy! Thank you very much. Now, take me as your bride. .....] With moist eyes, the Philosopher's Stone {interim} stared expectantly.

<Wait a minute! Calm down. Before talking about wives, shouldn't we start by getting to know each other better? I think we should make sure to take the necessary steps there.>

[I know you very well, Seina. From the day I was installed until today, I know what you've felt and what you've seen, every bit of it. After sharing a bed with Souren-san, I even know what he did in the bathroom.] It seemed to have been recorded by instinct, not function.

<Stooooo~p! Don't say another word! Erase it from your memory as well! Otherwise, I'll be more tempted to destroy myself!>

When Seina realized once again that she was the only person who knew everything about him, including his horrible history, he honestly felt that the existence of the Philosopher's Stone {interim} with its individuality and its innocence was a little scary.

[That can't be helped. Even if I look back at it now, it's still quite moving. Don't worry! It's normal for a young man.]

<Thank you for comforting me, ... I'm so happy I want to cry ... ... But from now on, I won't be able to hide anything from you.>

[It makes you feel better, doesn't it? Acceptance of self leads to growth. I have a role to play in that.]

We all had parts of ourselves that we didn't want others to see. Because no one else knows about them, we are convinced that we have to hide them or do not want to be seen. This is why the internally installed NB had the effect of self-development by providing another objective point of view to ease the obsession and bring mental stability.

<Oh, I see. That's why you chose to love me.>

It was also an expression of her willingness to accept all of Seina once again now that she had become an individual. She was smiling and happy, knowing or not about Seina's thoughts.

[Let's just say I was too young to be crying my eyes out there.]

Seina had lost the battle as long as she was even a little bit conscious of being “cute”. Seina's dictionary didn't include rejecting someone who loved him.

<Anyway, there's no need to rush, right? Because things like sex and children are much further down the road, even in real life.>

[If you accept me, I will wait for you. You and I will always be together, no matter what time it is. That's why we have infinite time.]

<And you don't like “Philosopher's Stone”, do you?>

[You're giving me a name? What's my name?] Her smile could be described as if the sun had suddenly appeared on her face.

<I just thought of it on the spur of the moment, how about Nayuta? It sounds like a higher being, further along than Nana, doesn't it?>

Of course, there were units of numbers above that, but this was a safe choice for a female name.

[Yes! Yes! It's a good name. I'm happy, I'm so happy!]

Just like Fuku. Her smile was so big that even he couldn't help but smile. He had given her the name because he wanted to get rid of any feelings of guilt he might have had, but her smile blew away all those feelings of guilt in one fell swoop.

<I'm glad you love it, but the ..... question is how to explain Nayuta to Kiriko.>

[I feel the same way as Miki and Kirche. It's fine to say that the installed NB has a will. I also don't want to insist on my friendship with Seina-san to the outside world.]

<..... hmm? Wait a minute! The same as Kirche's?>

[What's wrong with that?]

<No, assuming you have an ..... astral, you can't marry the person who built the program, but I was wondering who would be considered your creator.>

Of course, when the program came of age that law was deactivated after a certain amount of time.

[I called her “Mother Washu”, didn't I? So even if I have an astral, there won't be any problem with our marriage.]

<Yeah, yeah. That's good.>

[Great!]

She looked like Fuku. She had the same expression that Kiriko and the others had at the wedding on the moon.

<You know a lot of things, don't you? I thought you said you couldn't access Washu's databank. Is that your instinct too?>

[Yes. The basic knowledge necessary for daily life has been maintained, and since I have access to the magical element's personality realm, I can use that data bank. It will also be possible to replace lost functions with magic in the future.]

When he finally calmed down, Nayuta dropped another oversized bomb.

<..... Huh? ..... What did you say? I feel like I just heard something amazing.>

[I have access to the area that controls and monitors the elemental system, and have made friends with the personalities there. But you're the one who created the connection in the first place, remember? Don't you remember?]

<Me? I was sick with the magic cold, and I was ..... ah! I remember that you said you had an astral link with something. I heard a voice saying something about ..... magic element.>

Groping through the faint threads of his memory, Seina concentrated on trying desperately to remember.

<Yes! I heard a voice saying all kinds of things about magical elements, ... and yes, I could recognize the content!>

[That was only a fixed sentence at the time of the first access, but because of your response to it, the consciousness that was in the personality realm judged me to be a kindred spirit and accessed me.]

<Like-minded? The same kind? Do you mean like a little strange or weird?>

[I want your baby.]

A streak of blue appeared on her temple for a moment, then she approached with a bewitching smile like Gyokuren's.

<I'm sorry! I'm quite surprised and a little panicky! I mean, I don't want you to learn how to threaten me like that. ......>

[If that's the case, please don't say anything that might offend me!]

<Wow, I understand. Well, that's right. ..... So, let's be specific, what's going to happen?>

Unlike women in the flesh, Nayuta could never be seen embarrassing herself, only Seina would be embarrassed. In other words, no matter the time or place it is, she was capable of getting back at Seina in a violent way.

[If I were to use a fantasy expression, it would mean that you've obtained a grimoire of magic elements, an Encyclopedia.]

<You mean that we can use magic?>

[In order to use magic, you need magical elements, so if you don't develop your magic organs and increase the amount of internal magical elements, you won't be able to use it at all, okay?] She spoke in a gentle tone, as if she was talking to a silly child.

<..... Well, that's true, isn't it? There's no such thing as a free lunch, is there? But why did such a thing happen?>

[First of all, let me explain her personality, what she is. She was born and until today, she was lonely because she was unrecognized by others, and she wanted someone to know that she existed.]

<She wanted me to know?>

It was the same for Seina. The horror of being alone and avoided by others was too much for a young child. Although it was only a few years before he went into space, it seemed like an eternity for a child, unlike an adult. Moreover, he was also fighting against the anxiety of watching his parents gradually become more and more exhausted.

<I understand. Tell me about it. I'd really like to hear it.>

[Okay.] Nayuta smiled, probably glad that Seina was serious. It was because she was his kind of person, and his loneliness was no stranger to her.

[You are correct in your speculation that the magical element is a life support system, as you mentioned in your discussion with Barigaru. It was created by a scientist who lived at a certain time in a universe that has already ceased to exist, but even he did not know how the magic element was created until the end of his life.]

<Then where does the magical element come from?>

[A planetary exploration mission found an icy planet in a solar system with several satellites, one of which had a thin atmosphere. It was far from the sun, the planet was icy, and there was no heat source anywhere, but it was warm and mossy life was growing there.]

<So this moss was generating magical elements to create the environment?>

[Yes. Fortunately, the scientist was a higher life form in the plant family, so he was able to communicate with the original magical plants, even if only slightly.]

<You mean like the Royal tree or the Dryad?>

[There is no detailed record of this. However, when the scientists and their team learned that the original species generated the water and heat necessary for life, they tried to use it for planetary development. In the process, they realized the limitless potential of the magical element and succeeded in incorporating it into a life-support system. However, as Barigaru and you discussed, it was not compatible with scientific civilization, and it gradually began to erode the civilization that already existed.]

<I kind of have an idea of where this is going. It's like the worst version of a demonic pandemic?>

[Many civilizations were destroyed by the erosion caused by the magical element, but it doesn't mean that the human race was destroyed. They just abandoned scientific civilization and switched to a life based on the magical element system. However, since this was also a regression to an early civilization, the disciples of the scientist and later scientists improved upon the original species and placed fetters on it to prevent it from eroding the scientific civilization unnecessarily. And they incorporated her into the system to monitor it.]

<I see. So that's why we haven't seen her on any planets other than the early civilizations. But even so, what does it mean that no one knows of her existence?>

[She was originally a surveillance program, so she has no personality. However, in the end, because the magical element civilization is stable, it does not develop beyond the initial civilization class. Since she was created with interstellar navigation technology, the magical element civilization does not have the means to access her in the first place.]

<So you're saying that it’s because I have the Philosopher's Stone installed in me. ... ... But isn't that technology also incompatible with magical elements? I'm from an early civilization, but I've been Bio Enhanced, and I'm already from outer space.>

[She said it was a “miracle”. It was the same pattern as Kirche's, where she slipped through the cracks in her system to get to the very heart of it.]

<Is there a problem with the Galaxy Academy?>

[How it becomes a problem depends on the feelings of the recipient. She wants you to help her solve that problem.]

<Help her? Is that something I can do?>

[The magic element is a system that is currently used only in early civilizations. However, that is by no means the limit of the system. Do you remember the language used when we accessed the magical element?]

<Yeah, that's exactly what Nayuta did for me. As I recall, ...> Seina pulled it out of his memory, then realized something and gave a big nod of approval. <I see. I see. “Fill the earth. Fill the universe. My children, build your paradise.”>

[Yes. The original purpose of the magical element system was to allow for activity in all places. With the magic element, theoretically, we can live in the raw state even in outer space. The universe itself becomes a place of activity.]

<In other words, she wants me to help her flood the universe with magical elements ......? Why can't she do that?>

[She's just a monitoring system, and her only contact with the outside world is Seina. And it is the survival instinct of the original plant species that is the driving force behind the spread of magical elements in the universe.]

<It's like ..... the magical element and the system are the car, and she is the GPS, and she has no driver's license, doesn't know where she is, and has no sense of direction.>

[Since this is a fantasy world, why not make it a little more emotional? In other words, we will write a new entry in the Encyclopedia of Magic, and make it a complete and perfect one, capable of operating in the universe. In other words, we want Seina to live as its owner, a mage.]

<Well, that expression is more fantasy-like ..... but wait a minute! I am certainly in a position to have access to science and technology, but to make it compatible with magical elements would take a tremendous number of years.> Seina then remembered what Tenchi had told him about his own body, which, like Tenchi's, could continue to exist indefinitely.

[Yes, that's right. That's why she called it a miracle.]

<.....I'm getting involved with a terrible person.>

[C'mon. Do you really think so? You said that advanced science and technology was no different from magic, right? You went out into space with the power of science before. This time, you are talking about going out into space with the power of magic.]

<To outer space, or to .....It was certainly very exciting at that time. I felt as if my world had expanded all at once, and it was now possible to go to places that were actually unreachable by people on Earth.>

[You can go to places that are unreachable even by the people of the universe. Isn't that romantic? This time, you're going to do it all by yourself. Isn't that romantic?]

<I won't deny it. But what about the compatibility issue with scientific civilization? It became the biggest bottleneck, and it was in this state until now? That might be the cause of my magic cold ... or rather, I'm confident that I'll do that because of my odd bias?>

[It's a sad coincidence. We call them external and internal magical elements here, but the original name is mana for external magical elements and ena for internal magical elements. It's actually only the mana that is incompatible with science and technology and causes it to erode.]

<Heh, could that possibly be the difference between taking it into the body or not?>

[Yes. And the reason why mana is incompatible with science and technology is that when the original species was discovered on the satellite, one of the scientists who came to investigate, or maybe his escort, did a rather large-scale cleanup operation against the erosion of mana.]

<And this is why mana became hostile to science and technology?>

[Yes. The erosion of mana was not a deterioration, but a gradual reaction that suspended the function, as if it recognized technology as a foreign substance and tried to render it harmless. When we realized that if we left the area where the magical element was located, the function would be restored.]

<It's the kind of misfortune that tends to happen at first contact. ..... So you're saying we just have to do something about the hostile impulse that's imprinted on us.>

[Yes, if a similar technique is recorded as elemental magic, it will be recognized as the same kind of thing and hostile behavior can be avoided.]

<That's what Barigaru was talking about when he said to build it with our materials. ..... Yeah, but what about the magical organ problem? If you spread them all over the place, it would be a disaster if the livestock and plants turned into demons.>

[I think Nana is one answer. We use demons and animals in this world, too. We just need to prevent them from forming herds of the same species. In any case, I think we should start by connecting the worlds that have magical elements, rather than spreading them around in an

unregulated manner. And I think the best person to discuss these matters with is my mother, don't you?]

The proper role of a philosopher was to make ethical judgments about the technology. In other words, she was the best person to consult on how to disseminate magical technology.

<That's true, but … I see.> But at the same time, she was also an uneasy character in many ways.

[There is no need to jump to conclusions, Seina, you have an infinite amount of time. It could be even further into the future... ... after the current human race is destroyed, right? And what's more, it doesn't have to be here. Why not go to another galaxy? Or perhaps just to another world. She has been waiting for so long that she is willing to wait even if it takes a lifetime.]

<That's a grandiose story that I can't even imagine. But .....> But inside Seina's mind, along with his bewilderment, there was a gradually growing sense of anticipation for the idea. It was the same sense of anticipation as when he went out into space, but at the same time, it was an act that might destroy the order of the world as it existed today.

[Do you care about the destruction of order? As a matter of fact, such a disruption of order is not an uncommon occurrence. It is a change in environment, and the same thing can happen if a couple has a baby. It can cause discord and even divorce. Your ascension into space caused the Da Ruma Guild to collapse, and the Galaxy Academy destroyed existing systems and many of those who connected with Tarrant, as well as Tarrant himself, didn't it?]

Seina was a destroyer of order for those who used and profited from that system for their own convenience. The vindictiveness was everywhere, but only contained by Seto and others.

<I've done a lot of things when I think about it. .....>

[And it is the same for any mother. The development of science is not only a blessing, but it also makes many people happy and unhappy. Do you remember the planet Acha was on?]

<Do I remember the planet where Acha was? ..... Ah! Oh, yes, I do. If only there was a magical element there: .....> That desert planet would be filled with greenery and water. And demons, of course.

[How do you feel about it, Seina? It is up to you to decide how to expand the magical element. I think it is fine to follow your heart as you know and live in this fantasy world.]

At Nayuta's question, Seina thought about what he had seen here and how he had come to be here, weighing the benefits against the danger. The answer, however, was not immediate.

<The world ..... is a world.>

The planet where Acha was and this planet. If he were asked which world he would rather have Acha live on, it would definitely be this one. Of course, whether or not Acha would want that was

another matter, but it would certainly have given her a wider range of possibilities to choose from.

<.....Yeah, traveling freely through the universe with magic... ... It sure is romantic. Okay, let's do it!> Seina decided. Of course, it was not a leap of faith. He decided to move forward, but gradually.

[Yes, Seina. I'll be by your side all the way. And now that we've settled the matter, let's get back to reality. You can't use any magic yet, and my functions are still lost.]

<True. Achieving romance requires steady effort, you know.> The time for happy fantasies was over, now it was time to talk about reality. Long and arduous work was Seina's forte. After the fun and fantasy came the hard work. Only those who were willing to do the work had a chance of realizing their dreams. <But with her, you'll have the knowledge you need. .....>

<No, wait! It’s not good to immediately and easily rely on someone else. There will come a time in the future when I will have to think and develop things on my own, so I want to do as much as I can on my own.>

There was a limit to the amount of knowledge that could be taught by others. However, Seina must go beyond that. Thinking for himself through trial and error required training, experience, and above all, his own awareness. There was a difference between memorizing and mastering. And knowing something was not the same as being able to use it. There were many people who knew many things but could not use them or apply the knowledge. It was a waste of treasure.

[That is also true. It's not very tasty to suddenly search for game cheats in a strategy book or on the Internet, is it?]

<That's what I mean! The first step is to feel the magic element, the magic power.> Seina tried to feel the magical power, picturing the magical organ in his chest. However, he was interrupted by a question.

[What's wrong?]

<Barigaru said that magic is triggered by a strong image. He said each person does it differently. But if magic is a system, there must be clear rules, right?>

[It's too bound by the name “system,” isn't it? The same magic does not mean the same thing to every person. Not all phenomena can be expressed in numbers.]

<The question is to what extent we can communicate with each other. But I remember I said something about translating the language of the magical element into our language. ..... It's possible to communicate with any human being, isn't it? So why is it so hard to use?>

[First of all, most people don't understand that it is a language. It was only because it was me that I clearly realized that it was a language. And it is unlikely that a child would notice such a

thing when they are in a daze due to a fever caused by the magical cold. According to her, only a few people have recognized it as a language in the past.]

<What happened to them? If they did notice it, does that mean they are now in the same state as me?>

[It seems that I became a great mage who can use various kinds of magic because I have a high link with magical elements, but even so, my link with magical elements is not perfect, and I can only understand the language. Of course, this is still a big advantage, but the magical element is only a system, so it does not necessarily understand our intentions.]

<So, she is the one who assists us.>

[No, she is only a monitoring system and cannot act as an intermediary between people and the magical element system itself. Think of it as a kind of search system.]

<So, it's like she searches and Nayuta accesses?>

[Even if Seina's image is incomplete, she and I are able to make the magic clearer. Of course, there will be slight discrepancies, but they will be corrected as you use it.]

<The language of the magical element is dangerous knowledge. Magic is a power, so it must be developed before you can gain the upper hand. I can't risk disclosing it at this stage. ......>

The knowledge that produced so many talented wizards was a veritable treasure trove. It was like top military secrets. And on top of that, they also possessed the “Philosopher's Stone,” which was an even more troublesome secret.

[It's all right if we don't disclose it. You don't have to take it too seriously, just enjoy your cheat, and you can even have Kamidake with you and my sister Fuku.] Kamidake was also a “cheat ability”, a super technology that had not been disclosed to the general public.

<... I see ... If you think about it, that's true.>

[The first question is how to use it. Can it be used? It is also important to determine what kind of problems may occur there. That's why Seina-san is a good physical guinea pig. You need to think about how to use the cheat, but don't hesitate to use it. There are many technologies that are withheld from the public, like my mother's, even after gathering data and determining that they are safe.]

The development of technology was the result of a series of failures. That is why success as well as failure was important data. If technology was not passed on and disclosed, it meant that future generations had to repeat the same mistakes and would never be able to move forward.

However, stagnant or slow progress was not always a bad thing. The primary driver of technological development was the military. And that development sometimes led to mass killings, excessive power, and wasteful use of resources.

<Barigaru was also concerned about the future of the systematization of magic technology. ......>

[I think we're a long way off from worrying about that. We haven't even taken that first step, and we have a goal to get off this planet, don't we?]

<Yes, you're right, we won't know anything about the dangers unless we learn to use it ourselves. So, let's review our magical knowledge first ... ... Barigaru used water magic, do you have a video record of it?>

[Yes, we have a good record of that.]

They played the projected video over and over again, stopping and zooming in to verify it. But ...

<Well. I just don't understand it at all.>

[It's just water. Anyway, why don't you actually try it?]

<As I said, we can't use water here. Of course, fire is no good either, but come to think of it, it's not a good idea to try activating magic inside the room.>

As long as they were not allowed to go outside, they could not carelessly experiment with magic. But time was valuable. It would be a waste to spend this time aimlessly.

Seina raised his hand and stared at it, just as Barigaru had done.

[The most important thing to remember is that you can't just create water and make it float in a spherical shape. It means you're using multiple magic methods at the same time, so it's too advanced for a novice to do.]

<I don't seem to be able to feel the magic either.>

[I know you can't feel it right away, but I thought I'd give you a hint by approaching it from the opposite direction. I'm sure you can tell just from the gestures Barigaru was doing, even though you can't see the magic element in the first place. ... ... Can you see the magic element? Even though we know the magic element is there?]

Seina's mind was suddenly filled with sensors and detectors. Of course, the magic element could not be recognized by scientific means.

<But it can be recognized by scientific means ... ... If it is possible to communicate with the magical element in the first place, is it better to keep it simple? I'm not sure how to do it, but I'm sure it's possible.> The moment he thought that, almost as if talking to himself, Seina's eyes went blank, as if enveloped in a fog.

<Wow ... I can see the .... magic element. It's pure white and looks like fog. That was a shock! I was only half joking. ..... But it's good that I can see it, but it's too visible. Can you somehow ... ... a little more, oh, lower the sensitivity, huh?> And then, the thick fog-like magical element quickly faded away.

[Looks good. It's a great advantage to see the magic element. Maybe you can even see it in the recorded video, so you can see how Barigaru is activating the magic.]

<Wow, ... something is wrong with .....> The veins on Barigaru's entire body are clearly visible in white.

[Seina's arms look the same, don't they?]

<Wow, that's really ..... amazing.> Seina looked at his arm, clasping and opening his hand. While it was a little creepy, it was also very cool. When the movement was attached, it was like looking at a robot with a complex internal structure.

<It's not surprising that it looks that way, since magic liquid crystals are present in the blood as well. But Barigaru's flow of magical elements seems to be a little different.>

[The magic is energetic ....., so it is an internal element. I'm not sure if I'm saying it wrong, so let's just go with the way we say it here.]

<I understand.>

[You said you were going to use the internal magical elements, but there are also a collection of external magical elements. Is this the same usage as the force field plant?]

The spherical magic element was gathered in his palm from the surroundings, or rather, it seemed to be absorbed by the small nucleus coming out of his palm.

<I see. I guess this is how they conserve the internal magical elements as much as possible.>

[I think it would be better to use only internal magic elements at first. By the way, ..., do you see anything thread-like in the magical elements gathered in your ..... palm?]

If you stopped the image and zoomed in, you would see that the spheres were indeed connected by thread-like objects. It looked like a spider's thread, which you couldn't see unless you looked closely.

<Yes.....What is it? Would you like to ask her?>

[I've decided not to rely on it. Anyway, I'm going to try to move the internal magical element.]

While looking at his own magical organ, he had an image of the magical element flowing from it. The image was clear when he could see it, so it was surprisingly easy to start moving the magical element. A sphere was formed from his left hand through the blood vessels. The threads that led to the sphere were clearly visible.

<I can see it after all. I can see the threads that connect to the sphere, and from the feel of it, they seem to connect to the control.> When he moved the ball, it remained on the string and stretched forever.

<Oh, great, great, great. Wired control.>

[So this is what it means to have a clear image. It's pretty hard to explain in words, so I guess it's no wonder the magic is so hard to invoke.]

<Yes,....., but even so, how far does this thing extend?> The sphere connected to Seina in a straight line no matter where it was located. And both the sphere and the string passed through the object.

[In other words, I guess you should consider both as magical elements.]

<But it seems impossible to confirm how far they extend. When you visualize the magical element, it's hard to see it when it goes far away. ..... Whoa!> Suddenly, Seina's vision increased by one. To be precise, it appeared at that magic element ball.

<Whoops! I feel sick!>

[Close your eyes! Please make my vision the same as yours!]

He quickly closed his eyes, and the queasiness went away, but it was a strange feeling. It was only natural, since he was seeing with a monocular, fisheye-like vision.

[Please make my vision the same as yours!]

When he followed Nayuta's instructions, his vision was corrected to that of a normal person, and his view seemed to move in the direction he wanted to see. Of course, he could see himself, so he saw how emaciated he was.

<Wow ..... I' m so skinny ..... I've never been this skinny, no matter what kind of injuries or illnesses I've had. That makes me hungry!>

[But your complexion is so fair that it's eerie in a different way.]

<This means that the magic sphere has connected with my vision, right?>

[Yes. It seems to have a wide range of applications, doesn't it? Not only vision, but other senses seem to connect as well.]

<Yes! Because it’s such a big deal, do you want to try different things?>

Once they understood how to do it, progress came very quickly. The magic sphere succeeded in connecting all five senses, as well as telephoto, infrared, ultraviolet, and night vision. Incidentally, when he used night vision, the sensitivity suddenly increased, just as it did when he visualized the magic element earlier, he was so flustered by the moonlight he made the mistake of rushing to Nana.

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<The wallpaper and exterior walls are also very strange. It seems like the generation of magic element itself is being blocked, so it must be a kind of warding, different from the warding constructed by Barigaru, so maybe it is a magic circle or a type of talisman.>

Seina sent the magic sphere outside and looked around. On the way there, he felt something quite like a tugging sensation when he it penetrated the wallpaper and exterior walls.

<I don't know if this house is special or if it is common knowledge, but I do this kind of thing myself, so I would not be surprised if there is similar magic in it.>

[In Seina's case, it just happened. But people who want information illegally are commonplace, you know. Preventing that is basic, to the extent that you lock your house, so maybe this barrier is common sense.]

<That is also true. But still, it's a strange feeling when you go through a wall. This means I can do nondestructive testing inside myself, right?>

[It might be good for diagnosing major injuries or illnesses. But aside from your own body, everyone has their own magical element, so there is a possibility that it might be rejected. In any case, there is no one who would casually allow you to experiment on them, and it would also be a problem if Seina's power was exposed. And depending on the situation, ... it's just peeping .....]

The magic ball could do the same or even more than a hidden camera, if you weren't careful.

<Oh, that would be bad. ..... Well, I can understand what Barigaru was saying. "Try not to stand out very much."> Seina raised the altitude of the magic sphere, looked around and saw some intense lights. It was the illumination of an opulent castle-like mansion built at the top of a gently sloping hill in the center of the city. Other palatial residences, probably those of aristocrats, lined the summit, each decorated with elaborate lights.

<It feels like Christmas, or a light-up show at an amusement park. And .....> The night was pitch black, just like in Masaki village. Even the slightest light was noticeable. Not only at the top of the mountain, but also at the foot of the hills, there were many lights concentrated in the distance, making it look like an urban area at night seen from space.

<It's certainly beautiful, but I doubt if it's really necessary ..... to be taken in for something like that. When it gets dark, it's best for humans to go to bed.> It was not a very convincing thing for Seina, who snuck around at night, to say, but it was a necessary thing.

[I guess that's right. By the way, you can get an idea of the terrain with this function. However, since the recorded data cannot be retrieved yet, it is not possible to search and identify the location.]

<I guess it would be nice to get an idea of the terrain ....., but I have a bad feeling about it .....>

[.....hmm? There's someone over there!] Nayuta suddenly said, and Seina also tuned in to her vision. Since one magic sphere was set up with Seina's vision and one for Nayuta's vision, each could see in a different direction.

<.....Ah, it's true.>

In the direction Nayuta was looking, there was a rather large tree in the garden of the house below, and the magic element of a person was visible amidst the leaves of the tree. As they approached the tree, there was a part where the two images seem to overlap.

[Perhaps it is a magical ward for the same cognitive impairment as Nana's. Please try to break the visualization of the magical element.]

<..... Yeah, that seems to be the case.> When he broke the visualization, one of the human magical elements and one of the images disappeared and it looked like an ordinary tree.

<I'll need to verify the footage of Nana when she was transformed later. By the way, do you think this ward will be able to detect my magic sphere?>

[Why don't you just lightly touch it? Either way, they can't see you.]

<That's true.> Seina gently touched the wards, but there was no reaction from the people inside.

<I'm sorry to bother you~.>

[Why are you saying hello?]

<Just for the record, I'm not a peeping tom.>

They continued on with the magic sphere and found two men in a disguised tent, looking at Barigaru's house through a small slit.

<These guys are total peeps.>

“....., little man, you might as well give up now.” The voice they heard was that of a man with a disgusted tone.

“Don't say that. You're persistent too.”

One was a man in his thirties who looked like a hunter-adventurer. And the other one was.....

[Oh, that young man is the young man who was in Barigaru's party. He suspected Seina-san of being a sky pirate and was going through your luggage. His name is Kicha.]

<That's why they're monitoring Barigaru's house under false pretenses? They're quite vindictive, aren't they?>

[Because of the warding, they must have come to check it out by direct vision.]

“If they find out you're doing this, it's going to be really bad. You've already been kicked out of the party, so the next step is to be expelled from the Guild in this district, which would normally be followed by expulsion.”

The man remained staring at the Barigaru residence through the slit.

“The kid is definitely a sky pirate, and since Barigaru has been to the sky, it's not surprising that he's connected to sky pirates.”

“That young guy had a magic cold, right? It's common knowledge that people in the sky don't get the magic cold.”

“At his age? Barigaru quarantined him so quickly we couldn't confirm that it really was a magic cold. I'm going to give him some defective magic crystals and claim he's incompetent and can't fill it up. There are several ways to fool Barigaru, you know?”

“I've known you since you were just a kid, so I'll give you some advice. With your parents' connections, you could have been an apprentice in Barigaru's party ..... and been more serious about it. If you use the name of the party to do that, borrow money, and do other fraudulent things, it's better to just get kicked out. If your parents weren't nobles, you'd be busted or fall into slavery in a heartbeat.”

“Shut up!” His tone changed when he got excited or elated, probably due to his half-baked upbringing.

“You have a loud voice.”

“..... I have big ambitions. How can I give up at this level?”

“You're going to cross over to the continent of the sky and ride a humanoid machine?”

“If I had that power, not only this country, but the whole continent would be mine, mine! Barigaru's old man would be part of the story. It's a problem because all the sky returners like to stay indoors.”

In contrast to the disgusted man, Kicha had a dreamy look on his face. This must be the reason for his behavior.

“You know that empty machine is not going to work here soon, right? What's the point of bringing it here?”

“It's not going to be useless anytime soon. We're going to build a stronghold in the sky and rule from there. What do you think? I'm a genius, aren't I?”

“We've been floundering since our very first move ... ... I don't mind paying for the trip, but you're going to have to pay for this one.”

“I'm going to be the ruler, right? I'll pay you as much as you want if that happens.”

“..... Well, that's okay. I'll ask my wife for it later.”

Here ended their conversation, a conversation that should not have been a comedy.

<That young man is not an aristocrat, but rather a thug of the moneyed type.>

[But the idea is surprisingly not bad. He's probably the type of person who goes around in all sorts of circles.]

<He said he was going to pay for his trip, but from what he said, he probably intends to go to space, just like Barigaru. I think he’s been doing all kinds of fraudulent things to save up for it, but I guess we should assume that his family is opposed to it.>

Even though they were not ostensibly enemies with the representative government of Abaryum, they probably didn't want their noble relatives to go there.

<Are they trying to get evidence that I'm a space pirate and threaten Barigaru?>

[I'm sure he's thinking of making a backroom deal with you to go directly to the sky, or if that doesn't work, reporting you as a space pirate and getting a reward. But even so, there's a big discrepancy with what we want to hide.]

<I’m still being watched, though. If they find out I’m from space or had a magic cold, they'll use me as a bargaining chip. That's why we have to be careful. .....>

[What's wrong?]

<That window ..... Is that a ghost .....?> Seina found a white humanoid haze at the window of an unlit room. <? ..... Oh, that's Nana, isn't it? I see, it seems to be a ghost when I visualize the magical element.>

In the pitch-darkness, the feeling that only Nana's magical element was visible was like a ghost itself. The magic elements were especially concentrated in Nana's eyes and ears, so even from a little distance, the face-like appearance was clearly visible, which was quite eerie.

[That stream of magic elements must be enhanced vision and hearing,....., but by the looks of it, he's aware of these guys.]

The lights were off and they were peeking through the curtains, so Kicha couldn't see them, but Seina and Nayuta could see the magical elements.

<Even so, I was surprised..... When I think about it, if I visualize the magical element, I can only see the blood vessels, so if I bumped into someone in the middle of the night, I'd probably faint.>

[Heh. It's best to go to bed as soon as it gets dark.]

<Yeah. ..... Well, let's think of some countermeasures. I'll be hungry soon and if there's going to be this kind of surveillance, it's probably better to stay home and be quiet.> Seina deactivated the magic sphere and called to Nana for dinner.

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<I guess I'll stay quiet and experiment with magic. First, water.> They went into the bathroom to practice. Seina first formed a magic sphere. <Water.>

He sent out a thought while imagining that the magical sphere would turn into water. The magical sphere turned into water and immediately collapsed into his palm and went down the toilet.

[Ah. I see. ..... It wasn't good enough to just turn it into water. But you've succeeded in creating water.]

<What's next, ... fire?> Seina created a magic ball about five centimeters in diameter, and when he thought <fire> it instantly became a fireball.

"Oh?"

He immediately felt a sharp pain in his palm where he had been making the magic ball, and the fireball disappeared. He quickly went to a nearby sink to cool the burn site. The system was supposed to store rainwater and sterilize and purify it, so it would be a waste of water if he left the water running. So, he soaked his hand in the water in the sink. He moved his hand frequently to cool the affected area, but it was a pretty bad burn.

[Stupid, stupid, stupid! Of course you'll get burned if you start a fire that close!] Nayuta's voice was half crying with anxiety. When emotions ran high, the childishness came out.

<That's right. If you think about it, it's only natural to start a fire in such close proximity.> Seina never committed this kind of foolishness, which was not bad luck, but led to injuries due to carelessness.

[I guess magic has a special, narrative image for you. But from the looks of it, you should probably get some proper medical attention. They'll know you tried magic, but either way, the burns will be noticed immediately. .....]

<But, but isn't there magic for times like this? Let's try some healing magic.>

[Oh! I see.]

Seina immediately looked at his injured palm and concentrated his magic element on that spot.

<Healing ..... what?> However, the magic element was not consumed, and nothing seemed to have happened.

[The actual healing process is not as straightforward as it seems, it may be that the healing process overlaps with the natural healing process, and that the healing power of a bio-enhanced body is faster than that of a natural body.]

<Yeah, that's probably true. So, ... recovery is not the same as ..... regeneration of the state?>

And while consuming it, the redness of the hands quickly disappeared, and the pain also disappeared. <It was a success! Thank goodness.....>

“Seina-san, Seina-san!”

Just as Nayuta burst into tears of relief, there was a knock on the bathroom door, and he heard Nana's voice, worried about Seina, who had not come out of the bathroom.

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After giving Nana a good reason for his long bathroom visit and the noises he was making, Seina went to bed. When he saw that Nana had finally returned to his room, Seina breathed a sigh of relief.

<I appreciate his concern, but am I really that seriously injured? Well, if the burns hadn't healed, I would have been taken care of.>

[I think half of it is surveillance, right? There are some shady people outside, so it's better for them to think that you are careful not to reach your master.]

<It’s reasonable to think so. But since I'm in excellent physical condition, I can't do anything about it.>

[Should we try to magically regenerate you back to your original state?]

<I don't know what would happen if I did that, since I used a surprisingly large amount of magic just to regenerate my burns earlier. Since the fever from the magical cold hasn't gone away yet, it means that the magical organ is still developing, so it is dangerous to use too much magical element. Besides, if such magic can be used, it is likely to cause more trouble.>

[But now that we have confirmed that the magic works, I think it's a good idea to think about how to use the magic in advance. If we decide on an experimental plan in advance, we can avoid danger and save time.]

<Yes. It was an unexpected benefit to be able to test the healing magic, but I was careless with the fire magic. You're right, it's important to think things through before using it.>

[Then you can do it in your room. But when it came to actual use, it was of fun.]

<Yes,.....>

Seina noticed some discomfort as he looked at his recovering palms, but

“.....gu, ggaa.....”

A voice that sounded like a snore suddenly came as if a radio was on, and he quickly searched his surroundings.

<What is it? It can't be Nayuta....., can it? It can't be Nana either. .....>

He looked around, but of course it was just Seina and no one else was there.

<It's not a voice coming from my ear. What about the magic sphere that was peeking at ..... you just now?>

[What? ..... And, wow!?]

The moment he became aware of it, the view of the peep site he had just seen interrupted his vision. As soon as he closed his eyes, he saw Kicha, who was sleeping comfortably with a man watching over him.

<I'm pretty sure I deactivated it. ..... Why?>

[Maybe just deactivating it won't make it go away. The location of the sphere is where we were looking earlier, so the sphere itself may be fixed in place, or it may be connected to a point of attachment at any given time.]

<If that's the case, it's like having a surveillance camera installed.>

[You can peek all you want. Wouldn't the peeping toms be thrilled?]

<Who are you calling a peeping tom! I'd say ....., but this is dangerous if we aren't careful. Anyway, as long as Nana is aware of this place, I'd better avoid getting involved.>

Sensing that this was somehow going to turn out to be a quagmire, Seina instructed the magic sphere to deactivate its fixed point. He re-activated it and confirmed that it had been activated in his palm.

<It's a strange idea, but it's a little far-fetched. .....>

Seina looked at the floating magic sphere and threads and said to himself, “It just came to me out of the blue.”

[I understand what you are thinking. I think this could be a means of teleportation ... You think so?]

<It could be?>

The moment Seina focused his attention on the magic sphere, his body had moved to that position.

The magic sphere was about Seina's height in the air, but because it happened so quickly, he could barely turn his body in a half turn like a cat, and although he managed to land safely, he made a bit of a noise.

“Is something wrong?”

And, as expected, Nana immediately appeared. He was so quick and so silent that Seina wondered if he was the one who had moved instantly.

“I'm still not used to this room, so I accidentally tripped over a chair. I'm sorry I made so much noise.”

“That's OK. Are you hurt?”

“No, I'm fine. I'm fine. Maybe it's because my body has been strengthened, but I'm fine.”

“I see. Well, please be careful.” Nana gave a lovely smile and a small bow and returned to his room. Seina's whole body broke out in a cold sweat as he watched him.

<This is not good. I can't even think about it.>

[What about putting a limiter on the manifestation of magic? If you think about it and set something like a keyword to execute it, you can suppress its sudden activation.]

<I suppose so. Check with her about that, just in case.>

[Roger that. ..... Says it's all good.]

<That's very fast.>

[The link to the other side is permanent. And just for the record, she told me that the threads are generally called “spirit threads”, but ..... you don't mind if I ask what they're called, do you?]

<I won't go that far. But if we assume that this is the same thing as what I heard from .....Kaguya, not just me, but a giant robot can move through space at a moment's notice, so what's going on inside?>

[Maybe it is a kind of upper hyperspace. According to Mother's theory, there is a super space in which the scale of the universe is a point.]

<Is it instantaneous movement on a cosmic scale? But this spiritual thread doesn't seem to be using much magic element to maintain it.....> Seina suddenly felt very tired.

[Oh, no! No! The internal magic element has significantly decreased. The visualized internal magical element is fading!]

Nayuta was right, Seina's blood vessels looked quite thin, as if they were about to disappear.

[Deep breath! Take a deep breath!]

<Ah, got it. .....>

If the image of magic was strong, then the absorption and accumulation of it would most likely be the same; Seina took a deep breath and imagined absorbing it.

[It would be better not to hold the inhaled breath too long. It seems that the efficiency of absorption of the magic element taken in is better at the beginning, and the later it is, the slower it is.]

<Okay, I'll give it a try.>

The absorption and conversion of magical elements grew faster and faster as he got used to it, and after ten minutes, Seina's weariness began to fade away.

[You will hyperventilate, so just be normal there.]

<.....Ah, it's getting easier.>

[You should train yourself to breathe normally from now on, so that you can absorb the magical elements more efficiently. And, like Barigaru, to use it with external magical elements, and to obtain magical crystals and use them as reserves. Above all, we should aim for crystallization to expand the capacity of the magical element organs.]

<I didn't mind because my magical organ is said to be quite large, but I was doing a lot of things. It's not good to see the symptoms of shortage suddenly appear.>

Seina's high level of magical element probably also meant that his physical strength was high. The fatigue caused by the lack of magical element was not half as bad as before. It could be fatal if it happened during some activity, especially when running away from demons or in the middle of a fight.

<It should be possible to see the increase or decrease the quantity of magical elements in concrete terms.>

<Yes, that's right. There is even talk of taxing the filling of magical elements, so I think there must be a way to measure it and a standard, but how do we know what that standard is?>

[In the future, it will be necessary to adjust to those standards, but for now we can just make up our own standards as we see fit. For example, how about setting the magical element required to make one liter of water as one?]

<I see. So long as you know the total amount and the increase/decrease yourself, you should be fine. But how do I measure a liter?>

[It is a cube of 10 centimeters. When you made the water just now, the amount was the same as the size of the magic sphere, so I think it's enough to collect magic elements of that size.]

<What? ..... Well, in terms of a sphere?> Seina quickly tried to remember the old arithmetic equation as he looked at the sphere of magic elements.

[Does a magic element only come in a spherical shape? Why don't we try another shape?]

<Eh? Ah, yes, that's possible, too.>

Seina looked at the magic sphere and tried to change its shape. In fact, any shape was possible. This must be the benefit of visualization.

<I guess it's true. It's like air, so its shape changes, doesn't it?>

After the standard was established, he restored the internal magic element and measured the amount of magic element, which came out to be approximately 886,000.

[With that number of magical elements, there would be enough for two elementary school swimming pools. As long as you have magic elements, you should not be afraid even in the desert, right? Bathing in the desert is a luxury that is possible, isn't it?]

<If you can teleport, there is no way you can get lost. But of course, if you can set up a point in a safe place, it's possible.>

[That's the drawback, isn't it? If so, can anyone use the points that someone else has set up? For example, someone on the staff, such as Mr. Souren.]

<Well ... the pirates may have some form of teleportation to call for help,..... so it's not impossible, but it would be a problem if someone who doesn't know ..... could use the point without permission.>

[What's wrong?]

<I think this could be a trap. Depending on how the points are set up, there could be an accident where you get in and can't get out, right?> Seina felt a chill run down his spine as he realized how careless he had been just now.

[How about having a lifeline with you at all times? If there is a point outside, wouldn't it be possible to get out? I think it's possible with a spirit thread.]

<If the spirit thread never breaks, that would be fine too. For example, ...> Seina created a magic sphere, which could move and extend the spirit thread. Then, he set a point in the middle of the sphere. The thread broke there and remained on the chain between the two magical spheres, which were immediately attached to each other. <The thread broke and re-attached, didn't it?>

[It may be because it was Seina's spirit thread that broke, and the point is also his own. If the magic has to do with the person's will, then it's possible that someone else's internal magical element is a little different.]

<If so, how do we verify this? And the fact that the magic spheres are attached to each other, could it be a property of the same magic spheres that they attract each other?>

[If you are aware of that. Maybe it's not that the spheres are attracting each other, but that the spirit threads are trying to maintain the shortest possible state. When you moved the magic sphere, the spirit thread was always in a straight line, wasn't it?]

<Ah, I see. ..... And it connects.>

The thread that had just broken, at the moment of awareness, connected to his palm and the point he used to sever it.

<Even if there is an individual difference in the threads at ....., it doesn't mean that they can't be severed at someone else's point, does it?>

[If we want to be safe, we should put some kind of setting or protection on the threads. But only if there is someone who can see the points and the spirit threads.]

<But there is no such thing as a “sure thing”. Even if you can't do it now, you never know in the future,..... The most important thing to remember is that you can't always be sure of what you're going to get.>

[However, there are very few people who can hear the voice of the magical element, so I think the possibility is quite low. .....]

<I've made a number of careless mistakes in the past, so I'll give you a heads up. I have to be careful because my usual instincts don't work so well when it comes to elemental magic.>

While saying that, Seina was playing with a magic sphere in the shape of a butterfly flapping its wings.

[I guess I'm still inexperienced there,....., but the magic element really is a mystery, isn't it? What is inside that spirit thread in the first place? Seina, when you went through it, did you feel anything?]

<Not really. I think Nayuta knows more about it than I do.>

[I'm sorry, I didn't recognize it either. It was an instantaneous movement, so perhaps time had almost stopped. .....]

After saying that, Nayuta stopped speaking, as if something was stuck in her mind. Seina, who was listening, did the same.

<[....Ah!]>

It was a flash of inspiration. And it happened to both Seina and Nayuta at the same time.

<Even a giant robot can pass through? At least I could!>

[Even at a distance on the cosmic level, instantaneous travel means that time inside does not elapse!]

Their cries gradually turned into laughter. Of course, they did this in their hearts, so as not to be noticed by Nana, who was right next door.

<Infinite storage! Four-dimensional pockets! Magic bags! Subspace storage! Time freezer! There are many fantasy items, but this is the most convenient dream item!>

[I think it might work!]

<Okay, okay, calm down. ..... Let's start with a thought experiment.>

Seina and Nayuta were not the most “magic literate”, but since “she” was assisting them, the number of people was sufficient.

<The most important thing is to make sure that the things in the string do not come out. ..... Can be completed by connecting two magic spheres with a string. The end of a single sphere will be inside my body.>

He didn't want to experiment with a single sphere to see what would happen to it. Two magic spheres could be kept independent and appropriate for various experiments.

<The logic behind keeping the next object in the string is simple. All you have to do is to attach a condition to the two magic spheres that either “what goes in does not come out” or “only goes in” as a one-way street.>

[Careful how you condition the magic spheres.]

<Yes, I know. Then we'd better put some conditions on what can go in, and make sure that nothing else can go in.>

[If you put a number or something on that thing, you can direct it when you pull it out, can't you?]

<Yes, that's right. Then you can put all kinds of things in there and they'll be distinguishable..... Yeah, but there's a trap of putting too many things in there and you won't know what's in there. Like Kai’s hard drives or Kenneth's erotic collection.....Oh, yes!>

At that moment, Seina was inspired to manage the data like a computer. <Wouldn't it be nice if we could keep track of what we put in, with a picture and a name?>

[I think that would be great. I can build a simple management software. The monitor can be connected directly to the visual interface, so it can't be seen from the outside.]

<Yes, that's right. There are some other features I would like to see, but first I need to verify that it can hold things properly and that I can get to them.> Seina created a magic sphere, extended a spiritual thread to attach another magic sphere, and made it independent. Then the two magic spheres were fixed in position in the air so that they did not stick together.

<Now, then, the conditioning of the magic spheres. .....> However, he was a little confused about the conditioning. It was difficult to use simple words like “water” or “recovery”.

<I'm so excited, I said it simply in words, but it's hard to express it concretely.>

[I'd like you to leave that part to me, handsome. That's what I'm here for.]

<I see. ..... Then, I'll be counting on you. Thank you.>

[Yes~~~yes ♡♡♡.] Nayuta was also soaring and was jumping up and down with joy at Seina's words of thanks. Her figure was a bewitching beauty, but she didn't feel like Airi, so she was really adorable.

<What’s going on? What happened?> He suddenly felt a strange sensation in his body, as if his strength had been drained from him. The magic element's value has been reduced by half. However, through breathing exercises, it rapidly recovered.

[The conditioning is complete!]

<That fast!? Hey?>

[The entrance is set up so that as the object enters it is covered with magical element. Please note that the entrance and exit points are set to separate spheres, just in case. The objects you put in are automatically assigned a number and image, but you can change the name and edit the classification later. And, once you have set up the system, the next time you put in the same items, they will be automatically sorted.] The moment Nayuta explained in rapid succession, an arrow appeared on each magic sphere.

<Did you manage to use that much .....? The magic of the magic sphere is so powerful that I could feel it in my body.>

[Yes, I consumed a lot of magic elements to set it up, so you could feel it.]

<Yes, it's amazing, but it's still just an experiment to see if it would work, so you didn't have to go that far, did you?>

Seina had decided not to rely on “her” as much as possible, but for a moment, the thought of whether or not he should apply that to Nayuta also passed through his mind.

[Once you set it up, the next time you use the same magic, it will be instantaneous. And the amount of magic element used also seems to be much lower. I set it up with two magic spheres, but it took about 20% of the time and the amount of magic, and Seina, you felt some discomfort the first time you set up the magic, not the second time, correct?]

<Oh, I did feel a jolt once, but I didn't really look at the numbers. But that's a big find! I'm sure that once we test things out, we'll be able to use a smaller amount of magic elements in the real thing.>

But perhaps it was because the childishness she had just shown was dubbed good fortune by Seina, and he patted Nayuta's head as he would do to a small child, perhaps because of her unexpected and pleasant discovery.

[Hyan!] Nayuta's face turned bright red, and she backed away, running from place to place like a puppy excited by the sight of snow before coming back to Seina again. Her face had a big smile on it, and if Nayuta had a tail, she would have been wagging it.

<I'm sorry, did I startle you? I just wanted to ..... say thanks.>

[No. I was so happy.] The combination of the childish and bewitching expression on her enraptured face was as dangerous as Gyokuren's. Thanks to this, the idea of not overly relying on Nayuta was blown out of his mind.

<..... That was a close call .....>

Nayuta had the kind of charm that he would have pushed her over if he had not had the experience of dealing with Gyokuren, Amane, or more recently, Souren, and the kind of resistance that he had developed. Of course, she was capable of accepting it, and Seina could feel it, too. But in real life, this would be nothing short of delusional masturbation. If he did that, Nana, who has an excellent sense of hearing and smell, would definitely know about it. It was a scary, scary, scary thought.

<I'm looking forward to working with you in the future. .....>

Seina stretched out and shook himself lightly to calm down.

<We're still in the experimental stage, so we can't just use whatever we have around here, and water would be safer in the bathroom or toilet in case it fails.>

He looked around the room for something he could put inside the spirit string, but there was nothing that he could use casually. If he could go outside or open a window to get a leaf from a garden tree, he would have no trouble finding a sample, but exposing Seina's current appearance to the outside world would be a bad idea with him being watched.

<I wish my hair ..... was longer,.....> Seina noticed a long white hair on the floor. The color of the hair suggested that it belonged to Nana.

[Picking up and storing Nana's hair is a bit perverted, isn't it?]

<That's because he's a male. And it's just an experimental sample. I will dispose of them after the experiment is over. Don't pervert the facts for the fun of it.> Seina said quickly and in a barbed tone of voice, wrapped Nana's hair in magical elements and brought it close to the magical element sphere. Nana's hair instantly vanished, and a small monitor immediately activated, displaying Nana's hair along with a number.

<Oh, okay! It's in without any problem. I'll try to get it out now.>

[What's wrong? You can either touch the magic sphere at the exit and visualize what you want to get out, or you can click on the image on the monitor and move it to the exit mark, right?]

<....., Yeah, that's right.>

When he followed Nayuta's instructions, Nana's hairs came out of the exit without any problem. After repeating the process several times, there seemed to be no problem.

[It's a success!]

<Oh, it worked! It's ....., but I'm assuming there's no structural change to what you put inside? I went through it by accident, but if there's any damage, that’s not good.>

[If so, let's test it with Nana's hair. Look for a new one.]

<Oh, ..., there are a few. They're white, so they're pretty obvious, but what do we do now?>

Seina picked up several strands of Nana's hair and brought them in front of him. <I was wondering if it's possible to do a structural scan with magic elements.>

[Structural scanning is not something you can do with ....., but I'll give it a try.]

When they put magic element on Nana's hair and did a “structural scan,” it felt like a lot of magic had been used, but perhaps the breathing method was working, and the values returned quickly. The total amount of magical elements was clearly higher than the first value they had measured.

<Hey, the magic element values are increasing. Could it be that .....>

[In such a short period of time, it is probably due to the crystallization of the magical liquid crystals in your magic organ. But it is a phenomenon that occurs when strong magic is used, and an increase in the quantity of magical elements is a good thing. More importantly, we are in the middle of an experiment.]

<Oh, sorry.>

[We're still maintaining the data, so we'll scan the other hairs as well.]

While Nayuta was using the magical element to scan Nana’s hair, Seina was scanning the other hair that had already been in spirit string.

<I see. It's true that the second time consumes much less magic element.>

[Now let's compare and verify Nana's hair.]

<What? ……The first time consumed much more magic element than the second time.> Seina quickly took a deep breath while visualizing the image strongly and replenished it. The speed of his recovery also felt like it was getting faster.

[……No indication that anything has changed. Next, let's verify it with Seina's body as well.]

<No, but I did move through it once, didn't I?>

[Seina-san's personal data has been taken by various people before, right? It's the same data that abducted Ms. Kirche.] Galaxy Academy's “human hunters,” Airi, GP Academy, Washu, etc., all used Seina's personal data to investigate the bias of probability.

<Oh! I see, that means that the data is still within Nayuta, isn't it?>

[Your personal data may be needed for emergency treatment. Naturally, it is protected with the highest security.] With Seina's extreme probability bias, you never knew when and where he could be taken to the hospital.

<I thought it was just extra knowledge, but …… thank goodness.>

[You can use your fingertips so please do the scan.]

<Okay,…… that?> Although it should be the same process as Nana's hair, he didn't feel like the magic of the scan was triggered.

[Is there something wrong? But it can't be. It's the same thing. It's supposed to trigger …… or is the scan area too large?] The amount of information was different between a hair and a fingertip. The magic wasn't triggered when he applied it to his fingertip.

<Maybe …… there is already data on it.>

[Data already exists? …… Oh, yes!]

Seina then remembered the strange feeling he had when he saw the burn scars.

[What's wrong?]

<I was wondering when I saw where my burn had regenerated. That burn was deep enough to leave a terrible mark on the skin, but it healed just as it was before. Isn't it strange that you can't tell where the burn was, and on top of that, the fine scars and everything else that was there before are completely intact?>

[Yes, that is true. If it is a reproduction from Seina's personal data, the scars should have disappeared, and the skin should have a more beautiful color. Hmm, that means that the current state of the body may have been stored.]

<If so, where do you think it is?>

[The brain, or the magical organ?]

<Ah, if the magic crystals can remember magic, then it's possible, isn't it? It is in line with what the magic element system said, “Magic remembers everything”. When the magic organ is formed, the body itself is strengthened, so it must be closely related to the body, right?>

[Certainly, it would not be surprising if there is a function to maintain the defense of the body in order to spread the magical element. If that is the case, as long as the amount of magical element is sufficient, it may be possible to recover from defects and adjust life extension. Of course, it is only a possibility.]

<I think it might be possible if we develop the magical organ. Is it possible that the longevity of elves and others may be a function of this?>

[Yes, that's true. But let's leave that verification for the future. For now, let's verify it with personal data. It would be ideal to verify the whole body, but there may be a problem with the amount of magic element used, so we should pick up a few parts and verify them.]

<Assuming that there is data in the magical organ, is it something that can be easily extracted? It seems like it would be difficult to verify the personal data stored in Nayuta, too, doesn't it?>

[Let's cover the part to be verified with magical material and compare it with my data as a specimen. Then there is no need to pull out every single piece of data.]

When Nayuta covered the area with magical material and performed the comparison, most of Seina's magical material was lost, but as a result, no alteration of cells, etc., was observed.

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<....., I'm in big trouble...> Seina collapsed on the bed, and after about ten minutes of full breathing exercises, began to feel better.

[The speed of recovery has increased by about fifty percent. The amount of magic element has also exceeded 1,500,000.]

<I've already done a forced experiment on myself.... I hope it's safe. At least I assume it's safe to move around for short periods of time.> He muttered as he slumped on the bed.

[It also means that the time inside is more likely to be frozen, right?]

<.....Well, that's true, but I'd also like to know how much other stuff can fit in there, and whether or not liquids and such will mix inside .....>

[I'm sure the question of whether they'll mix will be fine, as long as they're each covered in magical elements and sorted out?]

<I guess we should experiment at least. Well, let's try it with several separate water containers.>

[We could experiment with water storage in the toilet. I think it would be better to use the bathtub, but ..... and as for the time determination, you can make the magic sphere with the optical grid clock system stay inside and take it out after some time has passed.]

<Is that something that can be given to a magic sphere?>

[.....I guess it's impossible. It wasn't activated. In fact, I have that system myself, but when I moved a moment ago, the time lag between entry and exit was completely zero, so it was impossible to measure.]

<It would be suicide to try to keep my body in the spirit thread. For now, why not simply use ice or hot water? If you can measure the temperature precisely, even a day or so should be enough to verify it, right? I also wanted to make ice and hot water in a magic experiment.>

[I am sorry, but I agree with you.] Nayuta hesitated for a moment, perhaps being proud to be the Philosopher's Stone, having to resort to primitive experiments when there were more precise methods of measuring time.

<But I didn't know they still had such a sophisticated system.>

["Time is money" is a golden rule for my mother, you know.] Nayuta clenched her fists with a big smug look on her face.

<Well, that's typical, isn't it? But hot water and ice, or ..... how about that as a magic word? Hot water is made by heating with fire, but that seems to be difficult too.>

[I think its fine as long as it's easy to visualize.]

<Yes, that's right. Hot water and ice are the things that seem to have the most to do with magic. ..... Nayuta and "her" are so amazing that I'm afraid I won't be able to understand the use of magic itself.> The fact that the magic sphere setting was so "scientific", and the image of magic was a long spell tended to make him overthink it.

[I'm more than happy to rely on you, but would you still like to "use" magic?]

<Yes, at least a little. But even if the magic words "ice" and "hot water" can be used to activate the magic, we have to think about whether there are any problems. Even if we can use regeneration, we don't want to have accidents like we had with fire.> Hot water could cause burns if the temperature was too high, and ice could cause frostbite depending on its temperature.

<In the first place, if hot water and ice are used in magic, what temperatures do they indicate?>

[Then all you must do is specify the temperature. In that case, it is safe to set a temperature standard just in case.]

The temperature unit used by the magical element system was not always the same as that used in Seina's world. For example, the boiling point of water in Seina's world is about 100 degrees Celsius at one atmospheric pressure, but it would be dangerous if that standard was 50 degrees Celsius in the case of the magical element system.

<That's right. The settings are ......>

[The basic setting is one atmospheric pressure ....., which is probably about where we are right now, so if you set the boiling point of water at 100 and the freezing point at zero, you should be fine. ..... Oh!]

<What's wrong?>

[I'm sorry Seina, you said you wanted to use magic,..... but my words set the standard. Apparently, this kind of setting does not fall into the category of magic.]

<Oh, that's fine. If that's the kind of setting, I'd appreciate it if you'd go ahead and do it if you find yourself in that situation. Let's try a small piece of ice. If we use ice, it shouldn't be too much of a problem, and if we use water, it shouldn't be a problem as long as it is small enough.>

Seina laid out a towel and made a five-millimeter ball of magical element that would be fine even if it spilled.

<..... “Magic preparation” “water” “temperature zero” “activation “activation> The first test was the “magic preparation” and “activation”. He tried to put into practice Nayuta's suggestion that magic not be invoked out of the blue.

<Yes, it worked!> As a result, a spherical piece of ice measuring five millimeters in diameter safely rolled into his palm. <But as expected, the small piece of ice melted at body temperature. .....>

The next step was to make a larger piece of ice, this time at minus five degrees Celsius, and quickly put it in a container covered with magic element before it melted.

[You can use magic more safely with this. There are still some verifications left, but for now, this storage method can be considered complete.]

<Spirit thread storage, ... Yeah, that's a good name for it, easy to understand. But there is another problem to complete it. It is good for storage, but I think it is surprisingly difficult to get things out of it. Even with things that can be held by hand, there is the problem of how to make sure you get out what you put in, and with large objects or liquids like water, how to put them where you want to put them is also a problem.>

[So you were a little confused when you took out Nana's hair. It's true that when you put it in, you just have to clothe it with magical elements, but .....]

<Oh!> Seina, who was listening to the wise woman's conversation, raised his voice unconsciously.

[What's wrong?]

<Oh, no, I'm sorry to interrupt you. I was wondering if it is possible to put in any object as long as it is clothed in magical elements.>

[Oh, I see. That's definitely something I'm interested in. But that's not something you can experiment with ..... right away.] Nayuta looked around and chuckled. The best way to find materials for experiments was to find them outside.

<This is another matter to be confirmed at a later date, so let's start by thinking about getting things out.>

The storage of the spirit threads was the most necessary thing for their future activities. That night, the two were happily engrossed in trial and error until dawn.

Chapter Four: On Each Thought

“Where in the world is this Yamada Seina?” Enten Shinjyu Kasen breathed a huge sigh as he looked at the monitor that had been activated in the secret room in the royal palace.

Swords of all shapes and sizes were displayed in the surrounding display cases, without sheaths or hilts. His hobby was swordsmithing, and there was even a time when he seriously considered pursuing it as a career. His skills were at the level of a professional swordsmith, and all of the items in this room, with the exception of a few pieces, were made by him.

“Sighing, are you unusually troubled?” With a wry smile on her face, Akeha, one of Enten’s wives, and Ichika’s mother, entered the room with a large basket. The only other person who could enter this room, or even knew about this room, was what he called “a woman who can see and hold you face to face”.

“I'm not always a no-nonsense idiot either, you know.”

“If you're going to stay here, why don't you at least show up for Karen's homecoming party? It's a family party, so there's no need to feel self-conscious about it, right?”

Akeha placed a basket next to Enten and opened the lid. Inside it was full of food that could be easily grabbed and eaten; she called her Karen, her childhood name, because of her grandmother.

“I can't do that now that I'm separated from Ichika,” he said. “And I'm sick of listening to these depressing people's nonsense. ..... hmm?”

Enten casually grabbed some food from the basket offered to him, and peeked inside, suddenly intrigued by the taste.

“Oh, you like it?”

“I'm not a foodie by nature, so I can't really tell the difference between this and my usual food. ..... It's delicious. It's oddly palatable, isn't it? Is there a new chef in town?”

“That's what Karen-chan made.”

“What?”

Enten stared at the contents of the basket, which were so well prepared that one could only assume they had been made by a professional chef. Definitely not something you'd expect to see on a dinner menu, but certainly not something an amateur would be able to make.

“We were honestly surprised that she could show us at the party what she had learned on the other side of the galaxy. She took care of everything, from arrangements to delivery.”

“Didn't you hear any complaints from the Executive Chef?”

“I heard that they allowed it because it was an intimate party, but the Executive Chef is a very strict person who does not allow just anyone to enter his kitchen, even the princess, so I think it is quite unusual. As long as the recipes were submitted in advance and she actually made several of them, she received permission.”

Did Shien (Karen) learn to cook at ..... there?”

“She was trained there. I was surprised again when I heard that. ..... What is that?

“That's a surprise. Immediately after she came back, I investigated what she was doing over there. She was hired by a Princess of the royal family of Jurai and was trained in a fairly wide range of topics from intelligence to fleet command.”

“Do their Princesses do such things?”

“The royal family is a bit special. And so, out of fun and half out of curiosity, we had her do a simulation and she was able to go toe-to-toe with the top fleet commanders and beat the top knights to a pulp in hand-to-hand combat, so it was a big deal. And when you add to that the fact that she's also a skilled cook recognized by the Executive Chef, it's hard not to be surprised, right?”

“Well, well, well, how did they educate her? I would love to know more about it. I thought she was a different person when I met her again, you know.”

“The results of a full examination have confirmed that they are all who they say they are. Oh, and Minamo (Suiren) was the only one who had her Bio-Enhancement recalibrated.”

“That Bitch!” Akeha suddenly twisted her expression to express her displeasure. Her expression was so angry that even Enten pulled back.

“Calm down!”

“..... Excuse me. But when you say recalibrated, are you talking about over there?”

“Don't worry. They say it's detuned and amazingly stable. In fact, they report that the tuning was so perfect that it's actually improved her performance to an amazing degree.”

“I see. ..... Good. But that guy! ..... Can't you do something about that man? It doesn’t matter if he is Suiten-sama's elder brother and the chief researcher of the Science Agency, he still can't do anything about his own niece and nephew by making them abominable experimental subjects like that!” Akeha’s anger at the man was so intense that if she let her guard down a little, she would immediately become enraged.

“..... So, Minamo’s (Suiren) test results are top secret, I presume?”

“Of course. But even if they are top secret, he is a vindictive man. I don't know how much more they can hide from us now that they know Minamo (Suiren) is coming back here.”

“He can use the latest equipment that has been developed for his personal use, and he can do whatever he wants with the children of aristocrats of poor quality as his bodyguards. ..... I wonder if he could get his hands on the princess over there.”

“Because he is a man with high pride, of course, the ship that cut through the Heavenly Knights of the guardian over there, the guardian of the duel ethics, Sacred Mechalord ‘Yomotsu Wolf’… everything is all like he's made a duel of his technique. All in all, it's like he's falsified your technology for you.”

“There's a good chance he's going to try something. But with his dueling ethics the way they are, even Suien won't be able to push him as hard as she usually does.”

“If they can't go head-to-head, they're going to use some insidious methods. That princess, I hope she can successfully evade them.”

“As long as she's in Recepshi, I don't see the problem.”

It was hard to make a scene in Recepshi in the first place. Add to that Washu's vicious traps, and it had become an ironclad fortress.

“Then again, it's Minamo (Suiren) I'm worried about.”

“Hmph! Shien (Karen) isn't the only one who's been trained over there, Minamo (Suiren) and Shirohana (Hakuren) have also been trained a lot. They're not the quiet girls they used to be.”

“I hope so. .....”

“You forgot the other one. The Witch Queen, Shinjyu (Gyokuren).”

“Surely, she's not crazy like that other guy.”

“But now that the four of them have gone over there, it's as if they've declared a coalition. That's what this means. If Queen Shinjyu (Gyokuren) files a lawsuit against the council, we can use it as a good excuse to get rid of her.”

“Even so, I'm still concerned because we're dealing with that particular woman.”

“We are both in a lot of trouble, aren't we .....?”

“Yamada Seina-sama is still a man, so it's fine.”

“Well, that's true,..... but Shien (Karen) and the others, who showed tremendous power ..... over here, were assigned to assist Yamada Seina over there, so there are a lot of things to worry about.”

“And the princess from the other side who was so fierce in the duel, right?”

“Yes, I know ..... She said that even the four of them could not beat that princess, she's quite a monster! Well, it's obvious from that series of duels that ..... and Yamada Seina has taken her as an assistant.”

“Well, that was the sigh. But the hero who destroyed the great pirate Guild over there in just a few years ... I can't believe it....”

“A high probability of pirate encounters due to unusual probability bias, and ultra-high-performance ships and personnel capable of destroying the original Five Sacred Machines class Heavenly Knights, with the massive backup of the Galactic Federation, but still... It is only with Yamada Seina's ability that we have the extravagant lineup we have. No wonder they're being hailed as heroes.”

“Can such a bias ..... of probability really be that powerful?”

“But who brought in Godly Knight of the Pirates? After the duel, both it and “ZINV” are missing. The leading nobles and corporations of Renza are going crazy. It's a mad scramble, you know? The bait is certainly big, but it's still not normal. The policy makers are panicking because of the abnormality of the situation.”

“I see. ..... If it's that kind of person, it's only natural that he would attract that princess and Karen and the others.” Akeha seemed to understand what was going on, and she happily agreed.

(So that he can't escape? That's a pity. As a man, I feel sorry for him.)

In a sense, Seina and Enten were both pillars of the state, and Enten felt deep sympathy for Seina, who was also a prisoner, but of course he did not have the temerity to say so in front of Akeha.

“As for Yamada Seina, we can't move from here, you know.”

“When Karen-chan left for the other side, the mothers of those girls formed a group, so we've been in close contact with them. However, Karen's mother, Hyou, may have a conflict with Ichika, so I will be taking her place. But if that man is going to get involved, we will need to gather a few more people.”

“Hey, ..., don't be too flashy, okay? I'm not going to be a part of this.”

“I'm just trying to protect my grandchildren, okay? If you don't want any trouble, please get rid of them as soon as possible.”

Enten's wives had supported him since he was the crown prince, when he was an errand boy who couldn't even form a party yet. After the formation of the party, they were very active and were a major driving force behind their election as party leaders.

After they became party leaders, their political influence weakened as ministers tried to reduce their power, and they were replaced by a policy organization formed after they became party leaders. However, this was only because they voluntarily withdrew from the public stage, and their influence has remained quite strong in areas that men do not expect.

“Oh, I'll have to talk to those guys about this as soon as possible. ..... Hmmm? Oh shit!”

Enten, feeling a little hungry, reached for the basket and found it completely empty. For a moment, he doubted Akeha, but as he thought about it, he realized that he had simply eaten it himself.

(I thought Yamada Seina was supposed to attract pirates? Yeah, but it's the same in the sense that it wastes a man's earnings.)

With a delighted Akeha at his side, Enten regretted that he had consumed the contents of the basket before he had had a chance to taste his granddaughter's well-cooked meal.

Chapter Five: Crime Isn't Worth It

<Something strange and far away from the original image of ..... magic is increasing, isn't it?> Seina sighed as he reflected on the “magic” that he had developed over the past few days. <It's interesting that we can do so many things just by taking things out of the spirit thread storage.>

First, he thought that if a liquid such as water was to be stored, there should be some kind of container. He considered a container composed of a force field, but as expected, it was impossible to create a force field generation system with the current quantity of magical elements. His next idea was to compress air into individual containers. That attempt was successful, but it was inefficient to maintain the weight of water in the form of a container, considering the quantity of magical elements required to maintain it.

Incidentally, the ice and hot water in the container remained at the same temperature even after several days, so they concluded that time inside the container was frozen.

<After all, it's not like I can use less magic element if I increase the viscosity of the liquid itself.>

[The power arm was an interesting idea. I can't believe you reproduced the structure of an arm by isolating the air and increasing its viscosity.]

<There are big balloon faces and robots on Earth that change their expressions with changes in air pressure.>

Seina's arm of air extended from his shoulder and pulled a distant book close to his hand. There was no need to think of a difficult structure: the data was extracted from Seina's arm and “reproduced” in air. This was another trick of Nayuta and “hers”.

<It's okay if it's lightweight, but .....>

The magic was designed to take out large or heavy objects from the spirit thread storage, but no matter how strongly the air was isolated in the first place, it was still weak in terms of strength and required a large quantity of magical elements to keep it running. The problem was that Seina's body could not support heavy objects even if he could hold them.

[And don't punch with it. The recoil will send Seina's body flying backward or damage your joints.]

<Kk! ..... I'm still afraid of the concept of magic.>

[I doubt that this is magic, but ..... can I laugh .....?]

Sitting in front of Seina and Nayuta was “Seina No. 5”, a camouflaged weapon for Nana, a life-like adult doll that looked exactly like Seina. An android created with magic.

The whole body was constructed just like a power arm, the skin was a magical copy and functional paste, and the body itself maintained its temperature not with air but with hot water that was the same temperature as his body. The heartbeat, breathing, and even Seina's body odor was

reproduced. With Nana, it would have been obvious if he had come close enough to touch, but after much trial and error, he was able to make it so that as long as he was lying on the bed, he would not be able to recognize him. Thanks to this development, Seina's magical element had greatly increased from the time when it was first measured and now exceeded two million.

<I just thought I'd sneak out in the middle of the night ..... Come to think of it, trying to sneak out of the dorm with Kenneth and the others was a good memory, ha ha.>

[That's enough trying to escape from reality, please. It is certain that it is impossible to conduct further experiments with only indoors and toilets, so this is also for the development of magic.]

<That's just like Washu's daughter. But since this is the result of that, I resent Nana's competence.>

If the other party was a normal human being, in a sense, even something of a lower level could fool them. But when dealing with Nana, who had an excellent sense of smell and hearing, there was no room for cutting corners. The alibi for a little night out was this magical body. It was a far cry from the futon disguise and the sound device that recorded his snoring.

[What is it about the inside surveillance that is so much stronger than the outside surveillance? The people outside have been gone since yesterday.]

<When Nana noticed, I thought they would take immediate action. But since they've been like that for so long, I was beginning to think they were just going to leave it alone. Well, maybe it just took them longer because they were dealing with nobles, but the threat level is the same as ever.>

With or without Kicha, Nana's threat remained the same, and Seina breathed a sigh as he looked at his magical android.

<If the data of the human body is recorded in the magical elemental organ, it would be magical if it could create a human body.>

[If it were possible to create a human body so easily it would be terrifying. But even this is a compilation of techniques that would be quite troublesome if people knew about them.]

<Yes, it is. Right now, it's wired and controlled via spirit threads, but with the use of magic crystals, it's possible to make it autonomous.> In other words, they could create android soldiers who did not fear death.

[The bottleneck is the quantity of magic element needed to maintain it. However, if there was a metal skeleton, the amount needed should be much lower.]

This magical body reproduced Seina's weight, but if he wanted to act while maintaining his own weight, he would have to reduce the amount of hot water he used to make it lighter. Otherwise, even with Seina's magical elements, he would only be able to maintain it for about 30 minutes.

<Well, he's just going to pretend to be asleep, so that's all he'll be doing.>

[If the metal skeleton and the quantity of magic elements available increase, it should be possible to create a body that even Nana will not be able to detect. Then I can use it as my external terminal body ..... in various ways, right?!]

<I will not pursue what you want me to do. But at this stage, I reject it!>

He didn't even need to ask what she was trying to say. In any case, this was someone's house, and Nana would find out at once, and there's a bad opponent just thinking about that before it was found out.

[But the ultimate goal is to get a proper human body.]

<..... Well, it's fine to set that as your ultimate goal. I'm not sure how to get rid of it now, but it's a good idea. But with your current goal, I don't know what to do with it. What, am I a murderer, you ask? Before that, I'm not creeped out by my alter ego. Even if it wasn't, my personal life has done a lot of things to me.>

[Children are also alter egos in a sense. .....]

<I'm in a hurry because we're running out of time!>

When it was time to eat, Nana would come to wake Seina. The time limit was about two hours. He put his coat on over his nightgown, put the magical body on the bed, and activated his bio-activity disguise at the same time as the instantaneous movement.

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The place he came to by instantaneous transfer was in a deep forest in the suburbs.

<I had a hard time finding this place. ..... I didn't expect to find such a monster in the sky at night.>

[I've been there with those wild bats. After all, when I use night vision and telephoto to survey the terrain, they swarm around me.]

When the magic sphere was lifted high into the sky, bat-shaped monsters called “spangles” gathered from trees here and there, and they made a lot of noise.

<They must be sensing the magical element.>

[Fortunately, if it's only visual, they don't come close to us, but Seina-san's bad premonition must have been about that.]

Thanks to this, the magic sphere could not go up very high in the sky for exploration, and during the daytime, Nayuta was unable to explore the area because it was too close to Nana. So at night, Nayuta moved low in the sky with only her eyesight and found this place. This place was rarely

visited by people even during the daytime, and even fewer at night. A magic sphere, “Alert-kun” (named after Nayuta), was placed there to warn people in case of emergency.

<There are no people or onlookers within a five-kilometer radius.>

[I don't think those onlookers will come to the forest but be careful.]

The trees growing there were normal trees planted for building materials, not demon trees. Moreover, the area was isolated from the sea of magical trees, so there were no dangerous demons. However, small flying demons, including spangling’s, did inhabit the area, which could be a bit of a nuisance when they swarmed together. But few species were active at night, and most of them seemed to feed on insects, so they did not attack people. Spangling’s also seemed to gather around the magic sphere either because they saw it as an enemy or because they were interested in something.

<..... It's been a long time since I've been outside.> Seina stretched and took a deep breath. The forest air reminded him of Masaki's village, and he felt like he was back home, but this was a fantasy world. Masaki village was a science fiction world, so it was not a normal place either.

<Well, let's start by investigating the capacity of the spirit thread storage.>

There was a pond and a river nearby, so there was no problem even if they were to flood the area a little. Even so, Seina first concentrated a magical element about twice the size of the bathtub to create water. In the next moment, it was stored in the spirit thread storage without any problem.

[There really is no problem with the storage.]

<Then let's start taking it out.>

One answer to getting the liquid out was a water tap. They set up a special spirit thread storage with water only, just in case, to let a little bit of water out from the point.

[.....Yes, that sounds good.]

Water came spilling out of the magic ball that served as the point. Even if they increased the amount or changed the size of the outlet, its momentum remained the same. To the casual observer, it would appear as if water was being produced from his hand. But here was the key to this experiment.

[Can you apply pressure to the water inside?]

<.....It looks like the inside is still no good. I'll try putting it under pressure this time.>

Next time, with the same capacity, he put it in with two atmospheres applied this time. The water came out like a squirt gun with the force matching the pressure. The force and distance at which the water was ejected varied depending on the volume of water and the size of the outlet.

<This could be applied in a variety of ways. Next, let's increase the volume of water and test the capacity.>

Seina made a pool of water about the size of a twenty-five-meter pool and stored it without any problem. He repeated the experiment five times just to be sure, again with no problems.

[There is no problem with capacity now. The first thing to do is to make sure that there is no reason why you have to have a single storage for the spirit threads, and the quantity of magical elements used to maintain it is also very small. ..... The next step is to start with soil.]

When they formed a ten-centimeter-square magical element from the soil to the subsurface and stored it in the spirit thread storage, a hole appeared in the area of the magical element.

<In the spiritual thread storage?>

[It's in. It's a success ... I was half joking.]

<Let's be honest and rejoice. Let's try a tree next time.>

But this was a controlled area, and these trees used as building materials had owners. For the time being, he was going to specify a range of branches of a small tree.

<Hmm? There is resistance. I guess it can't be biological?>

However, when the magic element was concentrated and the range was specified, that part went into the spirit thread storage, and the branch was cut off and fell down. And once severed, the part was not resisted.

[Even if it is not a magical tree, it has a certain number of magical elements, so it would resist as a defensive reaction.]

<But then, how well would this method work against strong demons? Would it be better to store the entire tree?>

[With this method, depending on the opponent, it may be more efficient to use a blade or another magic to attack them. And even if you try to put the whole thing inside, there is a possibility that it will be resisted.]

<I see. The same logic applies to transfers, but unless the person has the proper intention, he or she may not be able to enter the spirit threads.>

[Even if we could get the demon inside, we would eventually have to defeat it when we let it out, right?]

<Isn't there a case where we might need to capture one alive?>

[At that time, it should be combined with another method. Like putting them to sleep or numbing them.]

<I see, you mean that it is dangerous to try to force an effect with one magic? But there are various ways to resist the trap of spirit thread transfer, aren't there?>

[Yes. Let's resume the experiment ..... and try the next one with rocks.]

Seina went to a nearby cliff and tried the experiment on a rock exposed there. The result was that the rock could be cut and stored without resistance.

<Wow, ... this is amazing. And the cut is so clean.>

[I like .....! This can be used as a building material! If the rock is of good quality, you can build a house or even a bath by cutting it into large pieces and hollowing out the inside. As with wood, if you specify the range of the magical element, you can make any complicated shape you want, so it's easy to do all kinds of processing!] Nayuta's excitement was so great that Seina was a little surprised.

<Hey, hey, you look so happy, don't you?>

[I know that Kiriko and her team had designed a lot of things for Seina's new house, and I was very jealous of that.]

<I see. ..... Well, it will certainly be fun.> Seina agreed happily.

[If you build it sturdily, you can sleep safely even in the Sea of Magic and feel like you have a vacation home anywhere!]

<But the problem is where to find high-quality, large rocks. Would it be more practical to assemble them in block form?>

[Considering that the architecture here is stone, it's safe to assume that there's a large quarry nearby.]

<Yes, that's right. If there is, we will consider it, but not from a quarry that is in operation. Even if we were to buy it, we can't show them this capability.

[If we develop a detection magic that can search for geological veins that could be used for building stone, that's all we need to do. Wouldn't it be good if it's in a place that's unlikely to be developed, like inside the Sea of Magic Trees?]

<I understand, I understand. But even then, it's not going to happen right away.>

[Yes, of course! So, I'm going to change the subject, but there is something I would like to try. Can you please help me breathe and get my magic element into a full state of concentration?]

<Okay, but what is it that you want to try?>

[I want to see if I can use magic independently. Since you can think independently, I also want to test whether magic is possible with parallel thinking.]

<Parallel thinking. ..... It is true that Nayuta is the same as parallel thinking for me. Well, it's saner than creating my other personality.>

[If it's a simple parallel thought, I can handle it in tens of thousands, right?]

<Tens of thousands? ..... Oh, I remember that you are such a being.>

It was the same with NB, but because of his dubious personality and behavior, it was easy to forget that he was super-efficient.

[Then, I will give you a signal after the word here, so please say 'approve' right away, okay?]

<Okay, ... good.> Seina regulated his breathing and confirmed that the magical elements in his magical organs had recovered.

[“Skeleton”, ”High strength”, “Light weight”, “Composite material”, “Non-degradation”, “Necessary magical element accumulation”, “Formation”, OK!]

<Approved, eh?>

It can only be said that it was a sign of evil. If you think about it, it's an outrageous conditional, but because it was a high-speed language, he reflexively “approved” it.

<Hey, hey, hey! This kind of absurdity ..... is usually supposed to be triggered by ..... what?>

And the magical element began to flow out of Seina at a tremendous rate. It was as if he was losing all his vitality at once. It was like a dam breaking, a tremendous force, unmatched by any of the previous experiments.

<What the hell?>

For a moment, the image of death flashed in Seina's mind. It was a pretty bad feeling, even after all the injuries he's suffered. But he also felt that it was too late to stop it.

[To the external element!]

Fortunately, Nayuta's shout and from watching Barigaru's magic, he quickly switched some of the internal magical elements flowing into the magic that began to form in front of him to the control for gathering the external magical elements. It was fortunate that the spell of magic formation had already been completed, so all that remained was to fill it with the required quantity of magical elements.

<Huh!?>

Magical elements immediately began to concentrate from the surroundings. On the surface, the night forest was calm, but the visible flow of magical elements was like a storm or a typhoon.

Petan. Perhaps the bio-enhancement of the demonic elements had dissolved, and Seina's entire body strength was drained, and he collapsed on the spot.

Haaagh! Haaagh! Haaagh! Haaagh! Haaagh! Haah! He was breathing hard.

He was desperately breathing and absorbing magical elements, but the internal magical elements were leaking outward, though not as explosively as before.

(No .....?)

Suddenly the outflow of magical elements decreased and the storm of magical elements slowed down.

Haaagh! Haaagh! Haaagh! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! Haah! ..... Haah! ..... Haah!

Seina's consciousness was dazed, as if he had run out of oxygen for a while, but his head finally started to recover. However, his body still lacked strength.

“..... hu.”

The intense pressure of the weight of the body was lost, and cold sweat finally broke out from all over his body.

“..... What? What?”

The magical element that had accumulated before his eyes had passed through jet black and seemed to have formed a black hole.

Then it began to take shape, transforming into a pitch-black skeleton that emitted a strange opalescent play of color.

“.....What did I do? What did you make me do?”

The horror of seeing the abyss. He felt as if he was going to be dragged straight into hell.

If he had not switched to using external magic elements, he probably would have fainted. Even if the internal magical element was depleted, there was no danger to his life, but he felt that his magical element and life force would be sucked out until the very last minute, and if he was not careful, he might even have a heart attack.

“Is that .....?”

It still floated in the vortex of magical elements, looking down at Seina. (..... Reaper?)

The jet-black skeleton was the kind of figure that made him think of his current state, partly because it caused it. The vortex of magical elements subsided as if absorbed by it, and the skeleton collapsed with a surprisingly light bell like sound, as if the thread had been broken.

[It seems that the original Bio-Enhancement and the magical element enhancement did not function at the same time.]

<I wonder if you can give me an ..... explanation?> Seina could barely manage to say.

[First of all, the original Bio-Enhancement is functioning. Still, I wouldn't have noticed it if there hadn't been such a rapid depletion phenomenon here, ... how's that?]

Seina could feel the power returning to his body. Somehow, though, it felt different from the strength he had before.

<It's really ..... different.>

[“Functional Recognition”, “Demon Link”, [“Parallel Function”, ... please.]

<Hmm? Oh, ... “approval.”>

There was a kind of tickling sensation that permeated his whole body, and suddenly it began to heat up.

<Oh, hey!>

[Be conscious of your control! It's just like Bio-Enhancement training.]

<Oh, ..., I see.>

Bio-Enhancement was a constant state of being. Training was the cultivation of a sense of control over it, and everyday life itself could be considered training. If you could recognize the difference between the sensations of Bio-Enhancement and magical enhancement, you could easily grasp the sensations of control.

<Oh, yes,..... yes. I'm starting to understand.>

And once you learn it, you can control it unconsciously.

<I'm getting the hang of it, but ..... what the hell is this?>

[The amount of magic element recovery has increased tremendously! The magic element rewrites the Bio-Enhancement technique, ... and it's different, ... a kind of enchantment?]

<The hard part comes later! Once I switch over to the magical element enhancement!>

As soon as he was aware of this, the Bio-Enhancement state disappeared and only the magical element was strengthened. Since he had not yet recovered enough magical element, he couldn’t use his strength, but he could move as much as an ordinary human being.

[I would say ....., but time is running out. I'll explain the rest when we get back.]

<..... Yes.>

Seina stood up unsteadily, stowed his jet-black skeleton, and made an instantaneous move.

× × ×

<Oh no! Oh no! Oh no! Oh, no! Oh no!>

He returned to the room just in time for Nana to arrive, but since his strength had not yet recovered, he could not move as much as he wanted to. If you have ever had a drink, you would describe it as a feeling of being drunk, but in Seina's case, he felt as if the anesthesia was wearing off.

He left the coat he was wearing hanging on top of his backpack because he didn't have time to put it away, and managed to retrieve the bed's magical prosthesis into the spirit thread storage and crawled in instead. Nana came into the room at about the same time.

“.....Hey? What's that smell of wood and grass that's so different from usual? And you seem to be sweating a lot, is there something wrong with your physical condition?”

Seina turned pale as Nana sniffed around curiously. He still underestimated Nana's sense of smell, which could even detect the scent of a different place.

“I'm feeling fine. Well, you know, I've been moving my body a little slow ..... Oh, and I was just checking my stuff for a minute.”

Seina pointed to his backpack in the corner of the room. Seeing Seina's coat there, Nana approached Seina and put his hand to his forehead, a little more convinced.

“I see that ..... the fever has apparently stabilized. How does your chest feel?”

“Hm? ..... Oh, the hot feeling is gone. Could it be that the Magic Flu is over?” Seina himself was surprised about this, but the slight chest discomfort that had been there all along was completely gone.

“Perhaps it is. Once the formation of the magic organ is finished, your body will soon be back to normal, so I think your appetite will be back to normal as well.”

“I see. That would be very helpful.”

× × ×

[Yes, I agree, there are smells outside that you don't have in your room. I know it's a little late for that, but I'm sure he's sniffing out some of the emotions as well.]

The heartbeat, the blood flow, and the smells they emit. It was a higher-level version of a lie detector. After finishing his meal with Nana serving him, Seina finally got comfortable in the bathroom.

[The results are still very significant.]

<Aside from the Bio-Enhancement and the magical element enhancement, ... you will explain that one to me, won't you?>

[Yes. But before that, please try to reconstruct the body of the elemental material on the basis of the skeleton.]

Seina took out the mysterious skeleton and the elemental body and incorporated the mysterious skeleton into the elemental body. The amount of magic element consumed to maintain the body was reduced by a significant amount, and even if the body was operated in a standing position, the consumption was reduced to the point where it would be no problem to run it for a day.

<Wow,..... It's like how much magic element was being used to maintain strength. Could this possibly have something to do with it?>

[I'll tell you about it when you get back to your room. Nana will be worried and come looking for you soon.]

× × ×

[I'm sorry I did that without telling you. This was also a request from 'her'.] Nayuta apologized with a mysterious expression on her face as she settled down on the bed. However, her face showed a firm will, and she seemed convinced that that act was absolutely necessary.

<The magical element monitoring system?>

[Seina's future, I was told that she really wanted to interfere just once, ... and of course I felt it was necessary. But ..... I didn't expect it to be like that.]

<Ah, you don't have to worry about it anymore. I was safe this way. And I almost died because ..... well, it happens all the time.>

Looking back, he was quite distraught, partly because he was not used to being involved in magic, but if he thought about it, it was one of the lighter troubles he had encountered since he went up into space.

<So why did you want me to build that skeleton? What the hell is that thing?>

[That thing will be useful for Seina from now on, but it is not something that is absolutely necessary. The process of making it was more important.]

<The process?>

[Look at the quantity of magic element now.]

<..... Hmm?>

The magical element value could be displayed at any time, but since it was distracting, it was graphed. It was only an indication of the increase or decrease, and the exact number was not known. Of course, the numerical value was displayed for a moment.

“..... nn?!” Seina almost shouted and swallowed it in haste.

<Is this ..... true? It's over forty million! ..... I'm pretty sure it was around two million before we went outside, so that's over twenty times more, right?>

[I'm sure that's the number. And that's the proof that it worked.]

<Are you saying that you could have made something as big as a pure crystal?>

[No. .....Seina's magical organ is now forming a polar crystal.]

<Polar crystals? Not pure crystals?>

[Yes. In fact, there is a higher state of pure crystals. In a sense, the ultimate state of crystallization, which ‘she’ only recently learned about. That process was necessary to create it.]

<Even ‘she’ only recently learned about it. ..... Really? How is that possible?>

Having experienced the birth and destruction of several universes, she had truly lived through an infinite amount of time. It was hard to believe that even after such an infinite amount of time, there were still phenomena that ‘she’ had never seen.

[The highest level of existence with magical organs is currently the Ancient Dragon, but even they have only formed pure crystals. Their magical organs are the size of a small car, and nearly 60% of their blood is magical liquid crystals, and some of the older ancient dragons have magical crystals all over their bodies. In other words, the total amount of magical elements is so huge that there is no need to go to the trouble of turning them into polar crystals.]

<The amount of magic crystals in the body is so huge that there is no need to make them into polar crystals. But why would that magic create polar crystals? Of course, it's enough to make you feel like you're going to die, but compared to the magic used by dragons, it's a very small amount, isn't it?>

[It may be a small thing for dragons, but not for you, Seina. I don't know the exact cause, since I only traced the phenomenon that I have only one example of. However, ‘she’ and I both predict that the magical organs are still immature, and that there is enough internal magical material to activate that level of magic, and that there is a high linkage rate with the magical system. On top of that, one must be able to activate magic of a level that is much higher than usual, and the

amount of magic used must be so large that it makes one feel as if they are about to die. When these conditions are met, the polar crystal will be formed for the first time. .....]

<Well, as long as there are polar crystals here, we can only assume that is the correct answer. But how do you know it's a polar crystal?>

[The size of the crystals is miniscule. When we visualize the magical elements, we can see that almost all of the 40 million internal magical elements are concentrated in the almost point-like state. I am guessing from Barigaru's magical crystals, but I am sure it is true.]

<.....The magic crystal of one very small point is 40 million. Either way, it's certainly out of the ordinary.>

[I don't know if all the conditions for polar crystallization are necessary, but in Seina's current situation, it was quite certain, so I had 'her' force me to do it. The simple accumulation of magic elements can be substituted with magic crystals but considering the control of fine magic and the problem of theft and loss, it is better to have a larger capacity in your own magic organ. ..... Once the nucleus of the polar crystal is formed, the magic liquid crystal will become polar crystal around that nucleus, and so on. .....]

They didn't know how many magical crystals could be formed in the human body, but there was always a capacity limit, an upper limit. If this was the case, then crystals with a larger capacity were advantageous.

<Perhaps it is thanks to these crystals that the magic cold has ended?>

The reason why Seina's cold was prolonged was most likely due to the high rate of linkage with the magical element. In other words, it was the result of being judged to be able to spread the magical element that much. If this was the case, then Seina's magical element organs that had crystallized into ultra crystalline form had reached a tremendous amount of magical element, and it was highly likely that the formation of magical element organs had been judged sufficient.

<I see, now I understand why Nayuta forced me to use magic. Well, there are a lot of things I want to say, but the result is all right, I guess.> Seina smiled and patted Nayuta's head. There were many people who used Seina for experiments or as a toy, so he was used to it.

<But then again, I wonder what kind of being created the polar crystals in the first place? From the sound of that spell, it sounds like they were just trying to say a lot of things. Maybe they just left it up to the magic element and didn't know if the magic would work or not?>

[I'm sure that's how it is.]

<Ah, come to think of it, what is that metal that was created by such fantastic magic? Is there an official name for it or something?>

[It seems to be a kind of magical alloy. ‘She’ doesn't know what it is either, but the raw material itself and the manufacturing method were in the data of the magical element system. However, it has never been refined in reality, and the official name is “mystery metal,” as the first creator of ..... called it. It is abbreviated as “mystery gold.]

<..... What? What is that? A joke?>

[Even the person who created it didn't know what it was, so he called it “mystery metal” as a temporary name, and in the end, without knowing what it was, ‘she’ said, it became the official name.]

<But there was a manufacturing method, wasn't there? That means someone else created the theory, so there was no name he or she gave it?>

[There was only a theory, and there was only an organized number for the test schedule. So the name given by the person who completed it is the official name.....]

<So, “mystery gold” ..... but surely such things do happen, don't they? If only one person made it, you don't have to name it “this” or “that”.>

[It's surprisingly easy to say “mystery gold.]

<For now, though, the sense of it is amazing. So how much of a metal is it? Any properties or characteristics?>

[It's usually a metal, but it can change shape freely with magical elements. It is a kind of liquid metal. It is surprisingly lightweight, but its strength, hardness, and resistance are at a very high level by changing its characteristics. It can be used as a weapon, armor, and is an all-purpose metal.]

<Wait a minute! You can't be careless with that kind of thing, can you? That shiny black state is also a state, and it's too conspicuous. It's aptly named, but its performance is amazing! ..... Well, since we used such a large amount of magic elements to generate it, no matter how little we consume the second time, we can't easily generate it. ..... “Mystery Gold,” “Generation,” and “Approval.”>

Seina was quite impatient but calmed himself down by thinking about the amount of magic element for generating mystery gold. However, on a whim, he tried to form the mysterious gold in his palm. It was surprisingly easy to do.

[.....It's so easy.]

<Hey, hey, hey! Wasn't it only about 20% once I activated it?>

[Don't forget that Seina's magic element amount is off the charts. But even so, the amount of magic elements used is still small. Could it be that this also increased the efficiency of magic activation? Considering that the magical element conversion rate of the breathing method is also

increasing, it is likely that various efficiencies can be improved by becoming more proficient. Or perhaps this is also an effect of the polar crystals.]

<It's not like it's a game, so if you get used to using it, the efficiency will improve..... But even so, it's a liquid metal, and it changes shape in various ways.>

It felt like a fluid magnet. He moved it around like a slime, and finally tried to make a dagger. The shape of the blade, the shape of the hilt, and the shape of the handle could be changed as desired. <It doesn't seem to need much magic power to transform it. This is certainly convenient.>

Seina turned the dagger back into a sphere and dropped it from his hand onto the blanket. But the sphere remained in that form. A high-pitched metallic sound was heard when he played it with his fingernail.

[One drawback is that once built, it cannot be disassembled. But it's easy to separate and put together, so I don't think that's too much of a problem.]

<But it would be bad if Mr. Barigaru found out about this one in particular. At this point in time, it is sealed in the spirit thread storage for emergencies.>

[But since we're here, let's think of various ways to use it. Incidentally, there is also a “mysterious building material” with a similar name.]

<.....Well, we'll talk about that another time. .....By the way, are there any other mystery series?>

[There are only those two for now.] Seina put his hand on his chest in relief at Nayuta's answer.

[I'm going to go to ..... now. The first thing to do is to get your body back to normal as soon as your magic flu has settled down and you are ready to move out in the open.]

<Then let's figure out the exact location of this town and the location of the lake where ZINV is located!>

[What are your real intentions?]

<Those onlookers! We won't lose this time!>

Nayuta was the one who had the hardest time with the spanglings. She must be eager to get his revenge.

[What are the chances of winning?]

<It's very simple. We just need to move them to a higher altitude with the smallest magic sphere and add a function to it. Those onlookers must have a limit to their detection range and flight limit.>

[The slow movement speed of the elemental sphere is also a drawback. .....]

While instantaneous movement was possible between points, the points themselves could only be moved very slowly. The feeling was about the same as Seina pedaling his bicycle before he was Bio-enhanced.

<If we know the location of the ZINV, we can move the point and move it instantaneously. If we put ZINV in the spirit thread storage after retrieving it, it's a solution..... There is a problem whether ZINV can be put into the spirit thread storage or not, but .....>

[If there seems to be a problem with the storage of ZINV, we can build a base somewhere by excavation by specifying the range of today's experimental results. Using instantaneous movement, you can build all the secret bases you want in places where no one can go.]

<Oh, I like that! I like that!> Seina was a boy, and the word “secret base” was his weakness. This was the same as Nayuta, who was enthusiastic about building a house.

[If I evolve my magical elemental body, I can make my body, and I can make a love nest with .....Seina in a place with a good view .....Uhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhu.]

However, Nayuta's fantasy brought Seina back to reality at once. The difference between building a house was “living” and building a secret base was “playing”.

<Spirit thread storage, instantaneous movement, magic element prosthesis, and polar crystals ..... are supposed to be great magic .....>

The most popular form of fantasy magic is, after all, magic that combats powerful demons. But the magic that Seina had developed here was mainly a disguise magic to fool Nana's eyes, ears, and vision. And what Nayuta was talking about was the magic of daily life, full of desire.

<All of them are based on high technology, and with the existence of ‘her’ and the Philosopher's Stone, they are really a type of cheating, yet they are still .....>

The purpose of use was too, too much.

[But ..... this also means that it's peaceful. The most important thing to remember is that you can't afford to make any mistakes when it comes to magic.]

An inadvertent mistake regarding magic could be fatal in battle. Safety was important in the development of everyday magic, and surprisingly, as magic, the technical hurdles were higher than for simple combat magic. This act would not be in vain if it led to safety in battle.

<In the future, when we go out into space with magical elements, this kind of magic will be very important.>

[.....]

At that moment, Nayuta's expression suddenly became tense and she looked at Seina with a puzzled look on her face.

Chapter Six: Seina's Daily Life, A Little Future

“Oh, Seina-chan. Thanks for your hard work today.”

Seina was carrying a large woven basket on his back as he trained for his job as a meat delivery person and to regain his strength.

Meat deliveries began early in the morning when it was still dark, and he delivered ordered meat to each household, much like delivering newspapers or milk. The main meat was sold at the market run by the Hunters and Adventurers Guild or at a local store, but the guild also undertook deliveries to households far from the market or for breakfast. At the end of the delivery, when he delivered the meat to the farmhouse farthest from the city, he was approached by an old lady who had become a friend of the farmhouse.

“You have more than usual today. What is it?”

Seina made small talk and handed over a hefty portion of meat, wrapped in layers of magic tree leaves, which resembled banana leaves and had a powerful antibacterial effect. The elderly woman accepted it without hesitation, probably thanks to the bio-enhancement of her magical organs and the hard work of a farmer.

“This place is close to the forest of the magical trees, so people come here for periodic extermination. Seina-chan looks like a wreck this morning.”

“Haha, well, various things, you know.”

Delivery jobs were the source of the bias of probability.

This was the result of Nana, who had disguised himself as Seina, working to promote Seina's presence in the first place, but if it was to create an alibi to protect Seina's identity, it was undeniable. Being in an unfamiliar place, he took great care not to cause trouble, but it was very difficult to escape all the troubles. This morning, Seina was surrounded by the smell of meat, and as a result, a flock of a subspecies of spangles the size of dragonflies gathered around him. Fortunately, people here were either easygoing or laid-back, and few people avoided him.

“Maybe Seina-chan is favored by the Goddess of Mabiya, huh?”

The old lady gazed happily at the dusty, scratchy figure, partly because Seina himself was smiling even though he was in all sorts of trouble.

“Goddess of Mabiya, is it?”

“Yes, the Goddess who controls the balance of destiny. If that Goddess likes you, you'll have bad luck.”

“What, you don't mean that it will get worse?”

“She wants you to look at her, so sometimes she plays tricks on you. She's like a child, so don't hate her too much. She protects us from really bad things.”

“Ha, ha ..... I see. Thank you very much for all the information you have given me.”

He wasn’t angry when he heard what happened, and he knew many women like her, so he felt like that was the way it should be.

“Oh, no, wait a minute. Those people aren't like children, they're very unpopular, you know.”

Correcting his own assessment as he talked to himself, Seina carefully placed the large amount of vegetables he received in exchange for carrying the meat in his basket, and then left.

“The Goddess of Mabiya, huh? ..... From what I've heard, it sounds like this place is definitely polytheistic.”

A world dominated by monotheism had many troublesome things. This was because its teachings were absolute in every way. Sometimes it was stronger than the law, and it was a principle so deeply rooted in people's behavior that you never knew where the landmines might be. Of course, Barigaru didn't warn him of this, but it was good to be careful.

“The way your grandmother was talking earlier, you seem to be a bit loose religiously. Well, people are coming from outer space, so maybe they've already lost that idea.”

Seina looked up through a break in the trees at the city built into the mountains.

The old capital of Nashbar was built around a fairly gentle hill about 300 meters above sea level. The walls that remained here and there were the remnants of the huge fortified city, but now they were used as building materials to expand the city, and only a part of them remained in the forests. He didn’t know what kind of history this was the result of, but it was certain that there was no longer a need to maintain such huge walls. However, the forest of magical trees was still there to secure resources, so the danger of demons remained, but the vast farmlands and a certain system was taking over the role of the walls.

“It's time to go.”

The Lords' Hall at the top of the hill was beginning to be illuminated by the rising sun. This was usually the signal for the town to fully awaken at this time of the year. Most families began preparing breakfast around this time of day.

[Hey Seina, Seina! There are many things that look good. There are indeed a lot of things to do when you go a little out of town. Of course, you can't underestimate the city, either.]

What Nayuta was happily talking about were medicinal herbs and precious materials mixed in with the weeds that grew along the sides of the roads, in the plantings, and in the woods.

<Maybe it's because we’re in the middle of town that this is a blind spot. Visualization of magical elements is really useful, isn't it?>

As a result of various creative efforts since then, Nayuta was now able to control a magic sphere independent of Seina and act separately from him. Of course, since they had one body, this was inconvenient, but by adding various effects to the functions of the magic sphere, they could work separately to some extent. It was also significant that the quantity of magic element had become much higher by creating polar crystals. Moreover, Seina needed to sleep, but Nayuta could work all day long.

[It would be difficult without this because there are traps all over town. Seina, in particular, falls for every single one of them.]

There were traps set up all over the town for small demons, pests, and various other pest control measures. Seina could check his surroundings with his magic sphere, but he couldn't keep up with them, because Nayuta was monitoring his surroundings but still lacked coordination, and because they were not against humans, they did little harm, and the alert level was low. However, since this kind of trap belonged to a vermin extermination company, it was considered business obstruction, so from a financial point of view he had to be careful. If they were not careful, they would end up in more debt.

<Normally, I would say don't plant such things in places where people pass by. .....> But Seina was a man who got caught even in places where people don't go.

[We have to avoid only those things that are highly dangerous. Some of them are clearly illegal to use for surveillance.]

There were traps, like surveillance sensors, that could be used around town to spy on their prey. They were not permanently deployed but were activated when a person matching the criteria passed by, and sent information to someone somewhere else. Naturally, it was a surveillance trap for malicious crimes. However, Seina, who had visualized the magical element, could see it before it was activated, and could see a simple magic circle like a spider's web.

When he started walking around town, Seina, with his excellent hazard sensor, sensed that it was something bad, and reported it to Barigaru, who only sensed something, but later found out that it was an illegal trap. He taught Seina how to recognize illegal objects, and now he had a part-time job reporting their location for 10,000 Yen for each one.

By the way, the currency of this world was iron, copper, silver and gold coins, each of which came in large, medium and small sizes. Only gold seemed to come in several sizes, but they mostly saw large gold coins. The unit price seemed to be the Baru, but it had been changed to Yen which was

easy to understand in translation. Considering the cost of living, it was nice to be able to use the coins as they were.

[The most profitable part-time job so far is probably the one that you can get.]

<The most profitable job so far might be the one that gets you the most money.>

[So, let's specify the area. When they ripen, the bugs will eat them all.]

The flowers contained several rare medicinal ingredients, but they were volatile, and their medicinal effects were diffused from the moment the flowers opened. However, the flowers were not transformed into medicinal elements until just before they opened, so the timing for collecting the flowers was very critical. The convergence of the magical elements formed a boundary that covered the cluster of flowers, and the spiritual threads connected from there to Seina.

<Too many for the sake of ease of use?>

Hundreds of spider-like threads were already coming out of Seina. All of them were used for gathering medicinal herbs.

[They can go anywhere and no one will catch them, so don't worry about them. The city is full of them, too. I'll put the flowers in the storage when they're ripe.]

<It's nighttime collection, so if I'm asleep, please do it for me.>

[I'll take care of it. I'll go back to the museum to check out more things that I don't know what they are. It’s fun there.]

<I like that museum too. I could spend a whole day there and not get bored.>

The museum charged a fee, so you had to go there after you had saved up some money.

[Even so, it's getting hard to keep up. Just because there's so much in the spirit thread storage and it's so easy to collect, don't you think you're accumulating too much?]

<It's a debt of hundreds of millions of Yen, so anything that can be used to make even a little money should be collected!>

When it came to money, Kiriko's tone of voice would suddenly become harsh. This was also because she was thinking of Seina, so he wouldn't argue with her, but he just wanted her to stop smiling happily every time the debt figure on the contract given to Seina was decreased during the night.

<..... billion or .....>

It was the tenth day after Seina woke up when Barigaru brought the bill.

Chapter Seven: What about the Bird in the Cage?

The Barigaru residence ten days ago.

“Maybe it's because the fever has subsided, but your body has recovered.” Nana, who had finished breakfast and cleaned up quickly, looked at Seina's forehead and said relieved.

Seina's appetite was now three times a day, although the quantity was still large, and he was eating in the dining room.

“Has there been any change in your physical condition or mood? You've been strengthening your magical element, but you've been bedridden for so long that you need to be very careful about getting up and going about your activities.”

“Well, I know I've worried you a lot, but it seems like you should be physically active. I can move around like I used to, so I'm fine.”

“I see. ..... Oh, the master is back. If you'll excuse me.”

The door opening to indicate Barigaru's return was heard a few minutes later.

[He really has a good ear, don't he?]

<That thing gave me a lot of trouble, didn't it?>

It was a relatively quiet residential area, but in the morning there were unexpectedly a lot of pedestrians and a certain amount of activity, and he could hear Barigaru's footsteps from a few dozen meters away, so he had great hearing.

“Oh! Your face has grown back to its original state after only a couple of days of not seeing you. How does your body look?”

“Like this.”

His arms, exposed by rolling up his sleeves, had improved a lot and he looked like a boxer who had lost weight. He used to look uncomfortable with clothes on, but that was no longer a problem at a quick glance.

“He's a little thinner around the neck and his ..... face still looks a little uncomfortable. But that's probably because I see it up close and personal every day.”

“Now that I've settled into eating more normally, I'd like to put on the recognition disorder artifact Nana had and have him introduce me around town a little bit, okay?”

“Gahahahaha! I guess you’re bored being stuck in the house. Well, if you're in good shape, I guess it's time to get used to it. We just got the details of your debt, so it's a good time. Let's go to your room and talk.”

“Oh, but first, I'm going to the bathroom.”

“Gahahahaha! Looks like things are going well there too. I'll be waiting for you upstairs, so take your time.”

Seina heard Barigaru's voice behind his back and went straight to the bathroom, finished his business, and went upstairs.

Barigaru was waiting for him with a booklet and a small box on the table.

“This one measures the flow of magical elements. Put it on your finger first.” Barigaru took it out of the box and handed it to Seina, a ring with a small magic crystal on it.

“I taught you a few things about magic, have you tried a few things and got them to work?”

“Yes, well. It's just practice.”

As expected, advanced magic related to the magical elemental body was a secret, but as long as it was something simple, he didn't have to keep it a secret from Nana, so he had been experimenting with it openly in the bathroom. Especially after he was able to bathe, Seina loved to train himself to control the hot water in the bathtub and make it take on different shapes.

“Then pinch this one and fill it with magical elements.”

Barigaru held out a small box containing five magical crystals that were carefully stored like jewelry. In fact, the magic crystals, which looked like high-grade dark red coral balls in a layer of yellowish transparency, were treated as gems or better.

“In the meantime, we'll measure the amount of magical elements to see how much they have. Otherwise, we can't take any countermeasures on how to deal with them. If you are a normal human being, if you can fill the first one fully, you have the qualities to be a wizard. If it is the second, you are an elementary level wizard. The third one is middle class, the fourth one is upper class, and the fifth one is special class. Imagine that you are going to fill it with magical elements, just as if you were using magic.”

“All right.” Seina picked up the first magic crystal and let the magic element flow into it. The magic crystal in the ring began to glow a faint red light.

“Oh, one successful shot, huh? Good, good, keep on filling it.” Barigaru smilingly nodded his head and began to write something on the booklet. “..... Hmm? Hey, kid, are you done with the filling yet?”

“Yeah, it's still going in. It's a little heavy, but it's .....”

“Hey! Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute!” Barigaru took out a yellowish plate that was stored in the lid of the box and placed it on the ring.

“What's wrong? Is something wrong?”

“Ko, kid ....., shall I tell you what you've done?”

Seina nodded his head awkwardly at Barigaru, who looked dumbfounded. From the circumstances, he guessed that the ring was to check the amount of magic element.

“You’ve increased the value of these magic crystals by about 20 times.”

“.....? Raised? Not lowered?”

“The amount of magic element that can be put into this thing is originally about 20,000. The amount of magic element that you put in is a little over 200,000,....., which is obviously a lot.”

“The amount of magic elements that he put in is clearly a lot. ..... Oh, did he turn it into pure crystals?”

“I'm sure it's only partially. Either way, if you can pure crystallize, you're going to have a lot more trouble..... kid, you'd make more money if you became a child of the nobility, wouldn't you?”

“Ugh, ... I hope you won't do that.”

“Already at this stage, if it's only the amount of magical elements, you're a senior rank ..... third or second grade wizard. The most important thing to remember is that you need to be able to use the right tools. Of course, the boy himself needs to be careful when he fills up in public or uses magic. Anyway, if you don't know the amount of magic a normal wizard can use and be able to adjust it, high-ranking wizards and hunter-adventurers will certainly be suspicious of you.”

Barigaru added a couple of items to the booklet. Of course, that was Seina's debt.

“Thanks for all your help .....”

“You said earlier that the filling was getting heavy, but on the next magic crystal, try it and stop at that point.”

Seina tried with the next magic crystal and found that the time when the influx became obviously heavier was the upper limit for that magic crystal.

“Hmmm ..... Anyway, now I don't have to worry about you accidentally overfilling and crystallizing it. I'll get you a replacement for the magic crystals that the kid crystallized purely, but rest assured that the difference will be deducted from your debt.”

“..... Or perhaps, wouldn't it be better to just crystallize all of them to pay off the debt?”

“That's a really tempting proposition. .....The deal for pure crystals is that they are treated as military goods. There are a few people who can make regular crystals, so they won't be recognized on the outside for private possession, but their distribution is monitored and a certificate of authenticity is required to buy or sell them. I can get away with one small piece, but if it's all I have, they'll trace it back to me. Or do you want to go to the nobility?” Barigaru said with a straight face. Probably the quickest way to collect the debt.

“I give up.”

“Gahahaha! Too bad. ..... So.”

Barigaru placed the booklet in front of Seina.

It contained several pages of detailed expenses, from Seina's transportation to medical treatment, compensation for the work he did while he took care of him, part of the purchase price of the house, and the cost of the cover-up and bribes to all parties involved, all of which were very high numbers. Seina asked Nana to convert the figures into Nayuta's figures, and she gave him a rough idea of the cost of living.

“313,440,000,000 Yen, is it? .....”

That was a desperate figure, what on Earth would be called a salaryman's lifetime wage. If Kiriko were here she would be able to get the money and settle his account instantly, but that wasn't what he wanted, and Seina didn't even know how much money he had saved.

“Gahahaha! Good news for such a desperate-looking little guy. The Large Chimera is going to be made into a figurehead, and the lowest bidder has been predicted.”

“Is it still going to be skinned?”

“Yes, because that one is by far the most expensive. The amount will start at 120 million. The estimate is that it will be over 300 million. At the very least, you’ll get 32 million after taxes, and about 5 million if you include other materials. The upper estimate is 90 million.”

“The total debt is so great that it doesn't really feel like much. ..... It's certainly great. But it's like a special bonus for this one time only, so I'm both happy and sad.”

It was shallow to think that if he killed a few large chimera, etc. If the unit price was fixed, like gold, that would be fine, but as the number killed increased, the rarity value decreased. Even if he could hunt a few of them, the next one would probably be worth half that.

“That kind of firmness from you is a good quality, but as for me, I'm just regretting that my estimate was so low. Because I could have added another hundred and twenty million on top of that, gahahahaha!”

“You can't really pay me back if you get that kind of amount on top of it.”

“This magic crystal that the kid made into a pure crystal, the selling price at the guild would not be less than 4 million.”

Seina frowned, but Barigaru smiled.

“What?”

“Of course, the purchase price would be about 60% of that, but as I said before, with this quantity of magical elements, it would be in the realm of military use and large commercial use. This one

can keep the lights of the lord's pavilion, which is the ultimate in flashy wastefulness, for about five days. It's about 2 million just too fully fill it with magical elements."

"So the cost of lighting the moon is 16 million?

Incidentally, this planet has ten months of 40 days each, with the last month being 22 days, and a year being 382 days. In other words, the cost of lighting up the planet for a year is about 150 million.

"You see what I mean when I asked you if it you wanted to be a child of the nobility. Well, that's what that means, so now you understand why your debt is what it is, and what I meant when I said a hundred and twenty million on top of that, don't you?"

"Yes, I do."

Magic crystals would be the same as gold, there would be no price fluctuations. The same was true for the magical element filling if the consumption of the nobles and merchants increased in the future. As for this one, it would surely be a good money-maker if its identity were disclosed.

Seina's lifetime salary level debt would be paid back in about two years, but after that he would not be free. But as a hunter-adventurer, he would have freedom, but he couldn't imagine how long it would take to pay off his debts. Still, considering that this amount was the price of life, it was inevitable.

"Now, you will be under the spell of the contract. This is the kind of debt slave I mentioned before, but it guarantees freedom of action, and obedience to the contractor is voluntary. In other words, as long as the contractor recognizes that he is willing to repay the debt and is making regular repayments, he is not restricted in his behavior and is not subject to location restrictions, just like an ordinary person. So, no matter where you go or what you do, they have no control over you. Of course, if you're a little boy, you don't need this kind of bondage, but on the other hand, think of it as a way for him to protect yourself."

"Protect myself?"

"There's also a troublesome one wandering around. I'm going to have to go help you if you get into trouble, whether you want to or not. After all, you are an asset to me, gahahaha~!"

[It's a high debt, so it's natural to worry that you won't run away. It's only sincere to explain in advance.]

<It'll be like implanting a GPS in your dog or cat.>

Still, he could certainly understand why they would want to do that, and he could also agree that it was a natural step to take.

"I understand. Understood." Seina's bad-luck sensor did not feel bad. Without hesitation, he agreed.

“Okay. Now, a little drop of blood in the last spot and the deal is done.”

He pricked his finger with the needle, and when the blood came out as much as two drops, he put it on the place where the contract was marked. Then something like a magic circle floated up and disappeared, wrapping around Seina's hand.

“What is this?”

“It's dangerous to leave the contract as a form. I transferred it to your body and mine. Our contracts are linked to each other, as your debt is repaid, the numbers go down at the same time. This way we can't fool each other about the numbers and there's no more misremembering.”

And all the words on the booklet he showed me were gone.

“Well, it's an amount of money, and it's easy because you don't have to calculate every single thing. Well, good luck paying it off, gahahahaha!”

Thus Seina became a multi-billionaire debtor.

“Now that the contract is in place, I'll respect your wishes as much as possible. Since it must be mentally painful for you to stay cooped up here, I'll give you the magic crystals for the pseudo-magic by tomorrow, plus the magic you need.”

“What? Well then!”

“I'll have Nana show you where he's been, so you can go and see some things.”

The next day, Seina received a magic crystal ring for his disguise from Barigaru, who returned home in the morning. Along with it was the day's money and temporary identification.

Nana had prepared the clothes for the outing the day before. From top to bottom, it was a very common second-hand outfit, a little tired and unremarkable. But Seina was so excited that he didn't care. Of course, as he wandered around outside, he had to be careful not to skew the odds, but the night before, he and Nayuta had taken a number of precautions.

“In your case, unlike Nana, your height is the same and your voice is the same, so the magic of disguise is quite strong. That's why you don't have to worry about getting caught even if someone does a detailed physical examination, so you should enjoy it to your heart's content. I made sure that there was no problem entering the library.”

He handed Seina a magic crystal ring for disguise, and when he became aware of its activation, it transformed him into his original state. He checked the costume with the figure and tried to visualize the magical elements.

<Certainly looks quite solid.>

Looking at his face up close, the disguised part was quite dark and different from Kicha's disguise. When he touched it with his hand, it felt normal.

“Thank you. I'm going to go take a look at some things.”

“So, let's start by walking around the areas I've always walked around.”

Seina went outside with Nana's guidance and first stretched out and took a deep breath. After all, it had been a while since he had been exposed to sunlight and morning air. It was like taking a bath after having just wiped his body after catching a cold.

He started walking with Nana, and they walked out of the quiet residential area and down to the main street.

<This is what makes it a different world,>

The main street spiraled up and down along the perimeter of the hill and was used by various animal drawn carriages operated by nobles, merchants, and riders.

The carriages had solid suspensions and rubber wheels that made little noise even on the cobblestone pavement. The bodies of the carriages varied from those with wooden frames to those decorated with elaborate designs and painted with many colors of glossy lacquer-like paint.

<They are probably advertisements or store names.>

Some carriages were decorated with painted or written signs, sometimes with simple patterns. There were various types of draft animals, including four-legged and two-legged animals. Some four-legged animals were horse-like, some were dog-like, and some resembled elephant turtles that carried heavy weights. The bipeds were dinosaur types that resembled birds. There was also a wide variety of animals with long and short hair, shells, and hardened skin, some with decorative cloth and some with partial armor. This was also common among aristocratic and merchant-type carriages.

“I hear that some of them become ferocious when turned into demons, but I guess they listen to people properly.”

“Oh, you mean 'cavalry beasts'? They are trained from the time they are young. Slave collars and enchanted types are quite accustomed to people, and there are surprisingly large individual differences, such as only females, only when they are children, and so on. There are also the secrets of the trainer, so it really varies. Of course, there are quite a few that get out of control and are taken down.”

“Yes, so ..... there are quite a few.”

<So they're called cavalry. So the car that's towing them is a cavalry car?>

“It's not very common for a cavalry beast to be used in a town like this. However, away from the center of the city, there are many poor-quality dealers who use only powerful slave collars for the reason that they are cheap and powerful. There are also accidents that occur when they run

off the road. There are also cars that use magic crystal power, but this is a hilly area, and they don't have enough torque to carry heavy loads.”

“I see. ..... ugh!”

Suddenly the men walking by started cheering and whistling. They were looking at a large, gaudily decorated cavalcade that could have been mistaken for a parade at any amusement park, followed by men in butler-like uniforms riding mounted beasts.

“Oh, that's a brothel promotion vehicle, isn't it?”

The large cavalcade was an open type, and there were nearly a dozen beautiful women in nightdress like outfits with open chests and shoulders, smiling and waving to passersby. They were of various races, but all of them were eye-catching and sexy beauties.

[It looks like a parade of oiran (courtesans).]

<I don't think it's something that should be shown in the city during the daytime, by any stretch of the imagination.>

[But the people in town seem to like them quite a bit, don't they?]

Of course, there were some who seemed to be disgusted by the promotional vehicle, but there were also quite a few women who were waving back and forth, as if they were watching a little parade.

“Isn't that kind of advertising in a town like this going to be a problem?”

“The brothel here has developed in many ways and is now a general entertainment facility. As you can imagine, children are not allowed, but women can enjoy themselves as well.”

Nana turned to look at a cavalcade of women, this time dressed in men's clothing, approaching. After that, there was another carriage with stage actors, and it certainly looked like an advertisement parade for a general entertainment facility.

“Hmm?”

Seina felt eyes on him and turned around. But he could not tell when they started or who those stares belonged to, as the crowd was quite large.

[Seina. The spirit threads.]

Visualizing the magical element, he could see that there was indeed an unfamiliar spiritual thread attached to Seina's body.

<What have they done to you?>

[Don't panic, look at the cavalcade of parade riders.]

He again turned to look at the parade chariot as Nayuta had said. And then,

<What is it?>

The beautiful women and actors riding on the carts were connected by a great number of spiritual threads that had been extended by onlookers. It was like the paper tape used to send off a ship, and it kept coming and going.

[I have the impression that when a person has a strong interest in an object, the threads will connect to that object. Maybe it's unconscious, but I don't know.]

< I see, so “magic is an image”. This is exactly a ‘red’ thread.>

[The spiritual thread attached to Seina is from Kicha. There is also another man nearby who was watching from the tree, but there is no spirit thread extending from there.]

<Is that why I felt two sets of eyes on me, but only one spirit thread?>

[Maybe they are trying to keep the threads from connecting. I'm not saying that I can see them, of course, but the point is that they don't connect as a result of the same techniques that professionals use to kill signs of life. If you think about it, there was no spirit thread from Nana.]

<Nana is scary! But if it is ....., it means that visualization is not a panacea. It is dangerous to rely on it too easily.>

Visible information could be erroneous, and that was really dangerous. When it was visible, people tended to blindly trust the information. The pitfalls were deep and deadly because of this cheat's ability.

[It is amazing that you felt two gazes in that situation. That must be an experience due to the bias of probability.]

However, the sad part was that the target was only negative feelings such as malice or dangerous places, and the experience of feelings such as favoritism was surprisingly low.

<If Kicha is here, we need to be vigilant. Especially if Nana's route is always the same, we should assume that he knows that. They might try something.>

[I understand. I will be in charge of monitoring the magical elements, while Seina will be relying on his usual intuition, so let's be vigilant on both fronts.]

This was essentially the ideal cooperative arrangement between people and NB. “..... Nana, it's time to go.”

The parade was still going on, but Seina and Nana resumed moving.

The main street where the cavalcade passed, to their surprise, had a wide underground passageway for crossing, through which they headed to the other side of the street. The street was sparsely trafficked, and it wasn’t difficult to get through, but it was a consideration for the sometimes large merchant corps and armies, and the long blockades during the morning and evening rush hours.

The next street out was an upscale shopping district. In mountain cities, houses were built in the shape of terraced rice paddies. The flat land was about the size of three houses, but here, unusually, the flat land was quite large and had been turned into a small park. There was a fountain with a statue of a battle between people and demons, a dragon slain, a waterway, and flowers in full bloom. There were several open cafes, not food stalls, where you could have a cup of tea or a bite to eat, and as you passed by, you raised your hand to greet a waitress in a maid's outfit you “recognized”.

“Seina-san, please greet the waiters on the other side.”

Of course, these were acquaintances of Nana disguised as Seina. They were not the kind of acquaintances that you talked to on the job, just greeting when you saw them.

Seina had always been socially inept, or rather, avoided socializing, so he had lived his life without getting involved. However, for a child, this could be tantamount to persecution, and he may even hate them out of his own heart. Therefore, because he had made an effort not to memorize people's faces, he was not capable of distinguishing the features of other people's faces at a glance.

[Don’t be afraid of them. That's what I'm here for.]

In the past, such assistance was the role of NB, but now it was Nayuta's responsibility. However, he couldn't rely on that for long. He made an effort to learn their faces as part of his training. Of course, he also remembered to be on the lookout for danger.

<That small bridge in the canal in front of us, I have a bad feeling about it.>

[Correct. I think it is some kind of trap. It's a controlled type, not an auto-activation type, since it's all connected by spiritual threads.]

<Well, there are other people passing through, of course. So what do we do?>

This seemed to be Nana's path, and he just kept going.

<I understand that I need to pass the same place every day to impress people with my appearance, but that's the same as giving a perfect opportunity to someone who wants to trap me. ..... If I suddenly change course, they'll get suspicious, and it's hard to explain to Nana how and why I'm doing it.>

[Let's try using the spirit thread storage.]

<Whoa, that kind of thing .....>

And the trap that he indicated the range for had disappeared.

<You're going to enter, really? No resistance?>

[Maybe it's something like this. It may be a matter of the degree of the person using it, but Seina's ability has also increased, and we may be underestimating the definitive strength of the image that we can see with our eyes.]

<Certainly ..... that could be.>

[By the way, the trap you just described is .....]

<Wait a minute! Did you analyze it?>

Seina had never been a big fan of 'appraisal' type magic. Not all of them, of course, but certainly when it was against people.

If it was someone who was coming to harm you, fine. But to actively appraise someone who was not was the equivalent of suddenly going through their pockets or rifling through their wallet. For those who were in the business of artifact magic, the act of analysis was still a problem, but the act of copying it without permission and converting it into money was the same as stealing it.

[I understand. But if it's to find out the other party's intentions, that's fine, isn't it?]

<This kind of thing tends to become more and more insensitive, so please be careful. Be especially careful in the library we go to later. Don't copy all the contents so easily.>

Because there was such a wide gray area, once you got used to it, you would not question the act of appraising, on the contrary, you would tend to make up a terrible and arrogant self-rule to justify the act. Of course, this danger also applied to Seina himself. He was afraid of this.

[Yes, I will be careful. So, the trap I mentioned earlier was a thought-provoking type of trap, in which you speak your mind, and I thought it was intended to make you reveal your true identity to the people around you here.]

<..... If I had to give that trap a name, it would be “King's ears are donkey's ears”. But I don't like the idea of having a trap in a storage room, as if it might inadvertently cause an accident.>

[It is possible to deactivate it. Is it OK if I analyze it for that purpose?]

<Yes, in this case it's an illegal trap.>

[But let's use it in a different way, handsome.] The next moment, Nayuta made a really bad face.

“Koko koko koko, Cornelia-san, please marry me!” So said a young man's voice coming from the open cafe.

<What is that?>

A young man, who was sitting at a table in the café, suddenly stood up, ran to a woman seated a little distance away, and proposed to her. Seina looked at the young man and saw the “king's ears are donkey's ears” trap.

<I don't think so.>

[I think it's quite a nice recycle, don't you?]

<Wait a minute! If they're in different seats, doesn't that mean that the guy has a crush on her?>

Even if that was the man's true feelings, they didn't know what was going on the woman's side. If they were a couple on the verge of proposing, they would probably be sitting together. If not, then, based on his limited knowledge of love, which was limited to Seina's long history of unrequited love for Kiriko, the only pattern he could imagine was that the man has a crush on her and was quietly stalking her, or perhaps just watching her.

<If a woman were suddenly proposed to by someone she didn't know, she would be ......>

“I'm so happy! I'm so glad you finally approached me. I'm a little surprised, ... but of course I accept!” The woman said.

The men around them, all with the same goal in mind, looked at him as if they wanted to strangle him, and of course, the spirit threads as well. Well, for the others, since they had been snubbed and things had gone well, they said, “Blast!”

<Oh? Are they in love with each other?>

[I've already confirmed that both of them had thick spiritual threads attached to each other, right? Otherwise, they wouldn't have gone to such an outrageous length, would they?]

<..... Yeah, that's good. Well, I'm glad to hear that. .....?>

The two of them were now a happy couple, and the other men were in tears. The fact that they had already done it couldn’t be erased. Seina, feeling a sense of uncertainty, made an effort not to show it on his face as much as possible, and crossed the small bridge with Nana.

Seina and Nana then walked around the town. Once in the downtown area, Seina found small stores and food stalls all over town, and surprisingly, many of the people he greeted were artisans.

There were stores that repaired and recycled disposable daily necessities, which were rare in Japan, and sold everything from hats to shoes and clothing, as well as specialty stores for socks and gloves. They also repaired knives, pots and pans, kettles, and camping equipment used by hunters and adventurers.

“Is this where the hunter-adventurers get their equipment?”

“Weapons and armor are another place. Camping equipment is not for hunter-adventurers, but for daily necessities, and minor repairs can be done quickly and inexpensively here, so those who don't have a lot of money often go here and there for cheap repairs.”

These craftsmen worked with large windows facing the street and board doors completely open, so it was easy to see them and they greeted folks in a friendly manner.

“Even retired craftsmen continue to do it as a hobby, and there are a lot of extraordinary masters, so you can't underestimate them.”

Many of the craftsmen were quite old, with large couches and benches set out in front of their apartments, where they worked all day long while enjoying the sun with their grandchildren.

“Some specialize not in the whole work, but only in adjusting the grip of the hilt for a sword, or fitting the opening of the scabbard, or, more finely, only in one particular character when engraving a magic character on the blade.”

“One character? You mean that's pretty important?”

“I heard that it is difficult to engrave while maintaining durability. Since it is the blade of a sword, it will inevitably wear out and get scratches. If that part of the blade is damaged, the magic effect is said to be reduced by half, so some special class hunter-adventurers pay a lot of money and ask for a craftsman to do the job.”

Incidentally, Kicha and the others were relentlessly following them, planting traps, and getting their spirit threads stored from one end to the other. It was like something out of a comedy movie.

<The “king's ears are donkey ears,” “captivity,” “repentance,” “reformation,” “infatuation,” and finally, “crime.” Is this insane in a city like this?>

The traps were getting more and more extreme. They seemed to be angry because of their continuous failures.

<I asked Nana about it, and he told me that trap magic is normally available for purchase, but it is illegal to use it in the city. I've recycled a lot of stuff.>

In “King's Ears are Donkey Ears,” a waitress was wooed by a man who proposed to her at an open café, and by a man who was not a customer, who insisted on a relationship with her. In “Captivity,” a flowerpot would fall from a tree, a Seina staple. In “Penance,” children would fight. In “Conversion,” a rich-looking woman was bargaining with a child while he was on duty at a store.

“Heartthrob” was a perverted horse that was sniffing women on the street and would not budge from its spot.

[I should have rewritten “Castrated” for the horse.]

<Who said anything about “Castrated”?>

[I'm fine. We'll rewrite “Crime” as something else, but we didn't buy this trap in the first place, so there's no problem. Shall I do a “Confession” on that guy?]

<You ......>

[Oh, what I did ..... should have made that man the “Heartthrob” of that jovial horse anyway.]

<Kuhk? That's ..... a very tempting proposal, but I'm afraid it might cause trouble, so I'm rejecting it! Anyway, no recycling! After all, just because you can see people's emotions through their spirit threads, doesn't mean you should interfere with them!>

If someone was disturbed by their own actions, there was no telling what kind of unreasonable demands they may make on the owner. In the case of others, it seemed to have worked out well, but one never knew what disadvantages they might face later on. Sometimes a well-meaning act could bring about terrible misfortune for the person who did it. They should refrain from interfering with people they don't know well, and even superficial assumptions based on the fact that they could see the spirit threads of others could be dangerous. In particular, it was the worst thing for Seina to get involved easily.

Seina, however, was trying hard to stifle a laugh as he imagined the scene of the horse’s infatuation with Kicha.

“Seina-san, are you perhaps bored?”

“Oh, no. I'm having a little trouble remembering the faces of all those ..... different people. I've been trying to wrap my head around it a bit.”

“Oh, I see. The master has told me to go out with you as many times as necessary until you learn some of them, so don't worry about it. Besides, the only people who know me so far have met me in that place, so I think it's okay if you don't mind.”

“Okay, I know it's a hassle, but I'll be counting on you.” Seina said and exhaled heavily to calm himself down.

Kicha's pursuit and traps were a problem, but the avoidance of the biased probabilities involved in moving around in an unfamiliar place in the first place was exhausting his nerves more than he had expected.

“Well, I think it's time to wrap this up and take you to the library.”

“I don't think we're all the way there yet, are you sure?”

“You seem a little tired, so I think it would be better if you could sit down and relax, and I also have a few things to do, so I'll see you tomorrow. Do you have any plans for your return?”

“After the library, if it's not too much trouble for you, I'd like to go around a bit on my own. I am not good at remembering people's faces, but I am good at remembering geography.”

“Yes, no problem. For lunch, I recommend the coffee room in the library.” Nana said this with a smile, but from the magical element concentrated in his ears, it was clear that he had a good grasp of Kicha and the others. First of all, no doubt, his business was Kicha-related.

“..... this again.”

Seina looked up, appalled at the building, or more accurately, its foundation. He had expected a gorgeous old stone building, but the place he was shown was far beyond his expectations.

It was a gigantic Kiyomizu-dera temple. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiyomizu-dera)

“If there is no flat land, why don't you just build it?” He could almost hear some queen's voice. From Barigaru's residence, which was almost on the other side of the mountain, he could not see it at all.

“Is this the library?”

“No, it is not. It was originally the royal palace, but due to the relocation of the capital, it was used as a warehouse where various unneeded items were stored. It was supposed to have been moved, but it was left as it was because it was a hassle to move and cost a lot of money. After that, the items that were not necessary, took up space, or were not good for our ancestors to throw away were left there and it became a place where they were illegally dumped.”

“And it turned out like this?”

“The collection is much more diverse than I expected, and because it is a former royal palace, it has become one of the best museums in the country and abroad and has become a tourist attraction. There were also many books in the collection, so we have a library as a section of a general museum. This is also one of the largest in the country.”

× × ×

Seina parted with Nana and, using the ID card that Barigaru had prepared for him, went through the service gate that served as the entrance to the museum. As one would expect, the main corridor was off-limits and only opened to the public on New Year's Day. The main gate was only used by the king, state guests, or on state occasions.

Once inside, it was cool and refreshing, probably due to the protection of the exhibits. Surprisingly, many of the visitors looked like hunters and adventurers.

Naturally, they were not armed or armored, but they were allowed to carry daggers and other weapons, and their clothes and faces were clearly different from those of ordinary people. Even Seina, who had only been in this world for a short time, could tell the difference.

The interior of the former palace was spacious, but the decorations were surprisingly simple, as if it were an old castle for fighting. It may be a type of castle that was decorated with various furnishings and wooden interior.

It was indeed the largest ..... in the country.

It was a library that looked like a huge hall divided into two floors. As expected, the number of books in the library was huge, and there were many librarians at the counter, and the layout was easy to understand with information boards. The library was located on the opposite side of the orbit of the sun to prevent direct sunlight from hitting the books. The most distinctive feature of this place was the translation wards that covered the entire museum. Although the official language of Renza was basically used in this world, various languages were used for old documents. The museum automatically translated them, and even those who could not read could understand all the characters here.

<I guess it's impossible after all.>

The first thing he looked up was a map. But maps of the country were not available to the general public, as they were treated as military documents. Old maps were considered cultural assets and could be viewed for protection reasons. Even if you looked at the geography or the history of a city, you would find only a few sentences that described when and where they fought, and if there were any, it was only a small part of it.

<I was looking for a map of the city, but to my surprise ....., there is a fairly detailed block map of the city.>

However, it was divided into sections. The areas near important facilities were also left out. Basically, it meant that it was difficult to get a clear picture of the whole picture.

[If you think about it, a wide-area map is surprisingly not something ordinary people would need. For example, when you were in Japan, in what kind of situation would Seina-san use a map?]

<Hmmm? I would use ..... In my case, I would use it especially for ..... cycling, driving, transporting luggage, etc..... Huh?>

[If you are going somewhere you don't know, and you have the legs to travel long distances, then you should consider hiring someone who is familiar with the geography. If you are going for business, you may want to explore new places, or if you want to be sure, hire someone who knows the geography. Maybe we should ask the locals.]

<Then again, if you are looking for a guild of hunters and adventurers, you might be surprised to find one. But I guess it's not so easy to get there right away either. .....>

[I wish I could have used the magic sphere to check things out.]

<I don't have a choice at that stage. I'd like to see the data related to medicinal herbs. The data on the magical tree we obtained above is also gone, and as I said, the first request of a hunter-adventurer is to collect medicinal herbs.>

[I'm sorry for everything.]

<Heh, that's what I always say to people. But it's also good to collect this kind of data by foot. And the fruits I actually collected at that time, compared to the data, were quite varied, weren't they? Then it's the same thing that I have to investigate after all.>

[The trees are prone to mutation, and the vegetation changes from planet to planet and from land to land, so it is difficult to provide complete data, but it is still useful.]

<It's no use thinking about something that's already gone. It’s also an important opportunity to learn about the land and its people, and sometimes we get sidetracked by too much data.>

[.....Yes, that's right. I'm looking forward to seeing the specimens here, since they seem to be quite complete.]

<I'm looking forward to it, too. But please don't make a scanned copy of the entire room. The ID card is free of charge, but the general public has to pay an admission fee of 50000 Yen.>

The ID Barigaru had prepared for him was a semi-privileged one that allowed him free access to state-run facilities and priority use of places that required reservations, if they were available.

[Is that what you usually think?]

<If the money was going to be used for the upkeep of the place, the people who came after us wouldn't matter. If the people before us had thought that way, it would mean that this place would not exist, so we cannot be irresponsible.>

[Seina, I'm sure that's a good argument, but .....]

<If you want to live your life for yourself, you can do it in a “smart” way. But I'm worried about the future. Information is not only about how you use it after you get it, but also about how you get it.>

Information was something you knew what it is when you got it. However, Nayuta's method could collect a lot of material at once, but it took a very long time to sort. It also took time to judge how each one was necessary and how it could be used. The scariest thing was when you felt like you'd gotten it all, but when you needed it, you realized you were missing something.

Especially in Seina’s case, it could be life-threatening. He had to make sure he got it piece by piece and learned it all.

[But that's what I'm here for, right?]

NB was originally meant to collect and process such information, and its speed and accuracy were incomparable to that of people. Even if the link to Washu's databank was lost, Nayuta's basic capabilities were outstanding.

<I'm sure that's true, but I don't think the linkage with you is quite right yet. So, even though I don't have much information, I'd like to share it with you. I'm not going to leave it to you to “do things” until I'm sure of what you're doing. I know you have a lot of concerns, but that's how I've survived. I'm not nimble enough to change that way of doing things.>

[.....I see, I guess.]

<I am also causing trouble for people because of my probability bias, but there are still people who are willing to help me without any profit or loss. I can't be irresponsible when I think about them ..... Or is that something that bothers you?>

[No, Seina is right. With the internal installation type, information is exchanged more closely than with the previous external terminal type. It is true that mutual trust is more important. However, if there is one thing that concerns me about ....., is that Kicha's spiritual thread is still attached to you?]

× × ×

<I'm glad that I don't have to ask people to follow me when I browse books because they are printed in letterpress, but I guess it's still technically impossible for me to do photo books.>

Ignoring Kicha's spirit threads, Seina examined the basic medicinal herbs that they would need, and then moved on to the room with the specimens.

One of Seina's goals was to become a hunter-adventurer, and even if it was true in stories that the first request of an “adventurer” was to collect medicinal herbs, medicine was something Seina could not do without. To save money and to make a profit from the sale of what he collected, he wanted to know how to collect usable medicinal herbs. Of course, they were also used as food.

<It was interesting to see that the level of illustrations varied from book to book. I was surprised that some of the illustrations were of a very high level ....., although some of them were surprisingly poor .....>

[I felt that they were trying to convey the characteristics. I've heard that a hand-drawn portrait on a handbill is surprisingly more likely to be found than a photo portrait. Besides, there were some interesting drawings, so I would like to have them if they are available.]

<It's more like an art book than an illustrated book, isn't it?>

[I think Kiriko would like it. I'll never get tired of this place because it's a library with a lot of different things to offer. But as expected, there were only a few magic-related books, and even

with Barigaru-san's ID, we were not allowed to enter the rare book room, which was a pity, but we did get a surprising harvest from an unexpected book.]

It was a rather light book titled “Interesting Magic: One Hundred Mysteries.

<That was an interesting book. It was an entertaining book of little anecdotes and musings, but the ideas were so bizarre, it was like watching your mother.>

[It was just a phase of my imagination, but someone else was thinking about the same thing as the Spirit Thread storage.]

In that book, there was a section like on useful magical tools like an infinite storage unit that utilized a transfer gate.

[So there are no limits to what we can imagine. But ..... the magic book for beginners was an interesting thing for the same amusement, no?]

Nayuta's tone was mischievous, and her smile was full of mirth.

<But what if it was entertainment? I almost shouted, “What the hell is this?>

The book was for beginners, but it was a proper instructional book. It contained a collection of examples of spells and diagrams for activating the magic, along with some difficult explanations. For example, for the magic to create a single wind, there were about ten examples of spells, all of which could create wind, and some of which could not create wind.

– – Blow, wind, blow.

The simplicity started at that level.

– – In the name of Kanukat na Athleona Galigarustou Albarica Metalmus, the Creator God who created the heavens and the earth, I invoke you to blow, to breeze, and to be stormy. Let the blade of emptiness be born in response to my wish. Grant my wish! Please!

The long version was like that, but it ended with a plea, which was incomprehensible. Other than that, there were many other unintelligible coined words, such as asking for help from ancestral spirits or giving thanks to one's parents.

<There was even a poem about the wind, but I stopped reading after the first few words. It's not a magic spell anymore. The illustration explains that there are various poses that resemble wind ....., and to begin with, flapping your hands and fanning yourself, is that magic?>

The others were weird dances. There are also various poses to represent wind, such as blowing air through pursed lips, and an unintelligible avant-garde dance with a costume full of streamers.

[It's more like a prayer than magic, isn't it?]

<If I was asked to do such a thing without knowing anything about it, I would give up on magic at once. If it were a small child, but at my age, the hurdle is too high!>

If there was a magic school where high school-aged students were taking such lessons, they would immediately report their withdrawal from the school.

[Heh heh. I guess it's just how difficult it is for ordinary people to imagine and activate magic. Even flapping your hands might be surprisingly effective if you have a clear image of what you're doing, right?]

<Is this all?> Seina lightly fanned his left hand, and suddenly a gust of wind blew through the corridor.

“Kyaaa!”

The gust of wind caught the hem of the long skirts of the women walking in front, exposing their calves. They shyly held their hems down and looked at Seina, but this place was an open hallway, and Seina quickly averted his face abruptly. Things calmed down.

[Heh, it's too bad it wasn't a mini.]

<Whoever wrote the ..... book, I am so sorry for making fun of you.>

After that, it was a secret that he suddenly wondered if it was possible to make a “vacuum cutter”.

× × ×

<I was surprised ..... This place is certainly worth the price of a proper admission. No wonder there are so many hunter-adventurers here.>

Actual plant specimens could only be viewed in the reading room in the presence of a staff member, and special permission was required for rare plant specimens, but their collection of hundreds of thousands of specimens, including those from other continents, was the largest in the world.

[What was surprising was that the general class specimen material was sold in sets. Moreover, there are a hundred species in a set, and that alone contains almost all the main species used in everyday life, and even specimens of semi-rare species. .....]

The librarian explained that these specimens were standard materials that local hunter-adventurers and potions guilds would always have on hand, and if they were of a higher rank than this, they would be in the realm of very advanced specialties. They were powerful medicines and poisons, and some were addictive narcotics, requiring expertise in gathering them and a fourth or higher-grade qualification from the Potions and Medicine Guild to use them for recipes and other purposes.

<It is also amazing that there are greenhouses where various medicinal herbs are cultivated. There are about 800 varieties, but it is valuable to be able to actually see the living organisms of these herbs, which are used with high frequency and are apparently quite difficult to find if you actually want to try to collect them.>

[It would be nice to see a display of specimens of demons, collections of weapons and armor, traps, clothing, and so on. Especially the display of equipment of famous hunter-adventurers and mages from the past, when magic boxes were scarce, is a good reference.]

It was an important opportunity to see the prioritization of equipment needs, which was often neglected when there were spirit thread storage and high-level magic boxes. Not only new hunters who did not have a magic box, but also high-level hunters could benefit from this knowledge. For Seina, in particular, it was a great opportunity to compare his knowledge.

<It's a little late, but let's eat and go to town. We will be visiting here many times in the future, and we need to check something quickly, don't we? >

Seina went to the cafeteria, which was identified on the information board.

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The dining hall was separated for the general public and the privileged. The library also had a special reading room where a librarian would bring the books needed, and Seina's permit allowed him to use that room, but as expected, he could not borrow any of the treasured books, so he entered as a general visitor. Of course, he could use the dining room of the privileged class, but the meal was a full-course meal and he had to change his clothes. Apparently, there were also rental clothes, but he did not want to have such a meal.

To their delight, the cafeteria was equipped with a large magic box, so it was open all day. Hot food was always served with no waiting time.

“Hey, long time no see. You remember me, don't you? I'll have the third course.”

Kicha intervened just as Seina was about to pay for his meal at the ticket counter. He was obviously a friend of Seina's, and he was about to force Seina to pay for his meal. And what he ordered was the most expensive set meal in the restaurant.

“Excuse me, who are you?” Seina paid the exact amount for himself, received his meal ticket, and quickly went to the counter.

“..... Cancel that one. Make it tea, please.” With a scowl, he changed to the cheapest menu item and came after Seina.

“No, no, you were injured and feeling dizzy at the time. It can't be helped. I'm Kicha. Barigaru and I were the main party members who took down that large Chimera. Oh, why don't we go to the guest room? I may look like this, but I'm a man of many faces.”

“Oh, I remember now. Barigaru told me a lot of things about you.”

“!!?”

While Kicha was frightened, Seina moved to a spot near the window with a nice view.

“No, no, that's a misunderstanding.”

His expression twisted for a moment, but he quickly followed with a beaming face. Moreover, the moment he sat down, he quickly and casually tried to snatch one of the sandwiches off Seina's tray, but Seina moved his tray and easily ducked.

“..... I know a lot about you. A lot of things, you know.” Kicha whispered thoughtfully as he sat up and brought his face close to Seina’s, and then quickly returned to his seat again. He reached again for Seina’s sandwich, but Seina, of course, prevented him from grabbing it before he could. Of course, he did so very casually.

“I too had a hard time at Barigaru's house because of all the unreasonable treatment I received. .....

“That's why I'm worried about your situation. I am a relative of a nobleman. I am not a legitimate son, but I’m sure that I have much more power than a ..... commoner.”

“.....”

“Are you wary of me? But I certainly know who you are, ... so I can help you get home in many ways, and I can do a lot for you if something happens to you. All you have to do is take my hand. Then you are free.”

Kicha held out his hand with a really serious and sincere expression. The naturalness of it was like he was used to fooling people. Seina pretended to think for a moment, and then said, “..... I'm not sure I understand what you mean.” Of course, Seina didn't take his hand.

[Your mouth doesn't match your actions, ... Seina, aren't you having fun?]

The sandwich battle continued to rage on under the surface. As expected, they didn't seem to touch the stew, but maybe it was because Seina had already tasted it once.

“If you're saying I’m too old to catch a magical cold, the reason is simple. It's because it's the second time.”

Seina took the last sandwich into his mouth, and the battle was won by Seina. Next came the battle for dessert.

“Second time? Hey, hey, don't lie to me.”

“It's true. The first time was when I was just a baby. Well, I wasn't sure if it was a magical cold or not, but I found a book in this library that has the same case as mine ....., so why don't you tell me what you really think?”

“What do you mean?”

“Don't you want to discuss the distribution of the large chimera?”

It was Kicha's turn to be silent in response to Seina's question. Incidentally, Seina also won the dessert game.

[Maybe you are trying to prolong the conversation? Is the cause the spirit thread attached to Kicha?]

<Can you use the magic of disguise?> He glanced at the ring.

[Can I use it?]

<This artifact ring is something I paid for. I'm just going to use some of its features.>

[I understand. So, I just have to make sure that he doesn't recognize the approach of the person monitoring Kicha?>

[Thanks for answering so quickly. Please.]

“..... No, I still have questions. What's in your luggage is a bit odd, don't you think?”

“Oh, it's just that it seems to be from the Ascending Continent. It's a memento from my dead grandfather.”

“Is your grandfather from ..... beyond? Or is he being deported?” He seemed quite interested in the matter, his eyes devoured it.

“I don't know. That's all I asked, but didn't you do some research on me?”

“..... I know a lot more about you, though. That's a secret.”

“Okay. Well, I'll leave you to it.”

“Well, don't be in such a hurry, we'll talk about it later.” Kicha tried his best to hold Seina back as he tried to stand up.

“.....I fought for my life, too,” he said. “But they give me a fraction of the money and that's it.”

“If it's a distribution complaint, I can't do anything. I can invite you to Barigaru's house, though, can't I?”

“I know it's too late for that kind of negotiation. I know it's impossible to negotiate now, but what is your share of the money?

“Thirty percent.”

“If it seems to be less... 30%!? Really?”

“I've had to nurse a magic cold, and I myself was attacked by a large chimera and left penniless except for some luggage. I bought some debt and equipment to offset ..... or so.”

This information was a bit of a bait-and-switch.

“Yes, I knew it ....., Barigaru is deceiving me. ..... He's deceiving you. He took you in without consulting any of the party members. He knew the value of the large chimera and wanted to get his share of it. No amount of care he gave you would ever make him lose his debt and his equipment.” Glad to find an excuse to take advantage, Kicha began to speak gleefully.

“As I said before, I have a connection to the nobility. I can also help you get the proper compensation.”

“Of course ..... that requires a price, doesn't it?”

“Once you're associated with Barigaru, you're in trouble, you know? You'll be treated cheaply as an apprentice, and even if you make it on your own, you'll be treated unfairly in the allocations. I've been there, and I know many others who have been there. It actually costs a lot of money to get out of his party.”

“So, you're getting paid out of the large Chimera's share?”

“That's where you're lucky. As long as you have the nobility working for you, it's a good amount of money, but it's better than having to keep paying them all the time, right? And the auction price for the large Chimera is quite high. Isn't that a good enough return for you, too?”

“How much is that even at .....?”

“There! That's the thing, though. I have a better way. A loophole that's only possible because of me. Normally I would need about 80% of the proceeds, but if you transfer your rights to me, I'll give you 30%.”

“.....?”

“You're right to be suspicious. There's a trick to it. That is, if you give the rights to the nobility, they will negotiate with Barigaru. Your contribution to the defeat of the large Chimera would be more valuable with my testimony. If the members of your party accuse me of trying to keep you to myself, Barigaru's share will be ours. If we do well, we can even clear your debt. ..... How's that sound? That makes sense, doesn't it?”

It's certainly a convincing theory. If only it could be done correctly. .....

<I'm guessing that Kicha will either get the rights to it or resell the rights to someone else and tons of people will ..... It's about time.>

“Understood. Let me think a little bit about that proposal.”

“You'll miss the opportunity if you don't hurry with this kind of thing, right?”

“I'm afraid you have a visitor, Kicha, so I'll take this.” Seina stood up with the tray, avoiding Kicha's attempt to grab his arm.

“Go ahead. I'm done talking to you.”

“Oh, sorry.”

A sturdy, muscular man emerged from the shadows of the plants. About ten other people were already surrounding Kicha with big smiles on their faces.

When he noticed that Kicha had a spirit thread attached to him, he tried to guess who it belonged to, but it didn't take him long to come to the conclusion that he was a victim of Kicha's fraud, based on his words and actions toward Seina. If you looked for the other party's behavior on the spirit thread, it was not difficult to understand that it was surveillance until they found Kicha at the museum and gathered their friends.

“Hee?!”

There was no need to worry about what happened to Kicha, who had turned blue at once. From what he had heard from various people, including Kicha himself, it was just time for him to pay his tribute. It was only natural that they should have a discussion here. The rest should be discussed between the two parties and not something Seina should interfere with.

With his back to Kicha, Seina returned the tray to the counter and left the museum, heading out into the city.

<I knew it ..... but my bad premonition seems to have come true.>

At the far end of the garden stood a terrace-like viewing platform. It was probably a place to enjoy an elegant cup of tea while looking at the panoramic view below. However, Seina, who could visualize magical elements, was not in the mood to enjoy the view.

<Is that a detection system?>

[Yes. It was quite well concealed, and I was unaware of it until I let the magic sphere for exploration touch it. But even with the ability to visualize, I can't believe I could only see that much. .....]

Nayuta raised the magic sphere high into the sky and saw the wards that Seina and the others were looking at. The wards themselves, however, were not visible when they arrived on the plateau, and were only visible because the wards reacted to the spiritual threads, which were probably used for communication and transmission to the outside and wavered slightly like the

surface of water. The most significant reaction that triggered the awareness of the wards was the large main road leading to the city.

<It seems to be reacting to the carriages and people coming and going.>

There were three places that could be seen from the terrace, and all of them were reacting to the situation. And besides that, when he observed the surroundings with a super-telephoto image using a magic sphere, he found that it seemed to be reacting not only to the comings and goings of people, but also to a little flying demonic creature.

[It seems that there is a hemispherical boundary that covers this city. Perhaps it continues underground.]

Looking around, similar buildings were scattered at regular intervals around the boundaries of the wards, and a few soldiers could be seen there. It would be like a police box, so to speak. Of course, there was a large building along the street that resembled a triumphal arch, and soldiers could be seen there as well.

[No wonder this guy doesn't notice at night when there is no traffic. Even during the day, it seems impossible to see from Barigaru's house.]

<To begin with, people are less active at night. And if it is this difficult to visualize, it is even more so.>

[I'm sorry. I was really careless.]

<No, I didn't think there was such a huge boundary either. If I hadn't actually touched it with a magic sphere, I would never have noticed it.>

[But this makes it difficult to send the magic sphere out of the boundary.]

<That means this city has a wall called a surveillance ward. So, is it possible to locate this place from the view from here?>

[Yes, and with that river, the topography, and the museum building, it should be easy to locate.]

<And then there is the matter of inaccessible data.>

With a precise image from high altitude, even ants could be seen at night by magnifying the image. The view from here was only a part of the picture, but the former palace was also quite distinctive. With this much information, it would be no problem for the Philosopher's Stone to locate the place.

[I'm just guessing, but I don't think it's as far away as I thought. It's quite difficult to transport a sick person, and considering the duration of Seina-san's magic flu, if it took too long, it would have run its course by the time they arrived.]

<After he hid me in his home, was it safe to start disguising me, or was it two days at most for ......?>

[If it was by carriage, it would be within a sixty-kilometer radius. Maybe even shorter.]

<Two hours to the protected place and seven hours from there to ZINV's location ..... It would be bad indeed if we stay in contact with the barrier for that long.>

[Will you give me permission to analyze the warding so that I can go through it?]

<I thought you already did that.>

[..... sorry]

It was an analysis against Seina's will, and in some cases, an act that could be traced and put Seina in danger. But as the Philosopher's Stone, she was doing it as a matter of course, as part of her role. This was the part where, as Seina said, “the cooperation is not going well.

<Okay, I'll allow it. But please be careful ..... So, what's it like?>

[It's pretty tough. The configuration changes every few seconds, and it won't even trigger if I don't touch it in the first place. The points and spirit threads that I have inadvertently touched will also be detected. However, I did move the point where I touched the warding to the top of the mountain where the lord's house is located, so I guess that's not a problem. .....]

It would be the end if she put it up directly above Barigaru's house.

<There's always something up there, isn't there? So, since you touched it and it was detected, do you feel like you've been monitored in any way?>

[Not as far as I can tell. Perhaps Seina is sensing something?]

<I don't feel anything weird either. The more important question is what was that surveillance for in the first place?>

[If it is for surveillance, then who entered and exited, when and from where? I guess. Of course, demons would enter there, but seeing that they are also responding to communications and transmissions, I think the main purpose is to check on people.]

<Who? Then we have to be able to identify the individual, don't we? That still means there is a high possibility that there is some kind of internal demonic pattern. But as I recall, I put protections on my points and spirit threads, didn't I?>

[Yes. So that others can't take advantage of them. I don't think it is so easy to identify Seina-san, even in this ward.]

<Hmm? Wait a minute! Identified? I thought you said they took my pattern.>

[If they are checking you in and out, that means you were caught in that ward when you were brought here, Seina.]

<Wow! Then, my magical element pattern is also known?> Seina pondered for a moment, then looked up with a quizzical expression. <However,....., I was in the middle of a magic cold at the time, and my magic element organ was still forming. Is it the same in that in-progress state and after it is completed? .....Hmm, but how can I know that now? .....>

[Would you like to find out if the process is recorded in the magical organ? The pattern detected in the wards is in the early stages of the magic cold and after the formation of the polar crystals, so there might be a difference.]

Nayuta checked the area. There were many people, but their interest was focused on the garden and its flowers, and there were hardly any people near the terrace. No one paid any attention to Seina. <Let's just give it a try. I'm interested too, you know.>

[Excuse me ...] Nayuta must have started the analysis as the magical element began to be consumed at a significant rate.

Seina was mindful of his breathing and replenished his magical element, but the consumption was much faster. As expected, the situation was not such that external magical elements needed to be diverted, so the combination of Bio-Enhancement, magical element reinforcement, and enchantment reinforcement was applied. However, this method accelerated the conversion to internal magical elements, and suppressed the absorption of external magical elements in the surrounding area. Otherwise, it could explosively absorb magical elements and create a vacuum of magical elements in the area. If it were to go wrong, the surrounding people would be in a state of magical asphyxiation, unable to absorb magical elements, and people with small magical element capacities might experience a state of magical element depletion. If that happened, all hell would break loose.

<!?>

After about ten minutes, the consumption of magical elements abruptly stopped, and Seina also released the enchantment enhancement. Moreover, with this magic, there was a feeling of crystallization again.

[There was a record, but the amount was so huge that it took a long time to read it.]

<So how did it go?>

[As it turns out, your pattern of magical elements changed before and after. Apparently, the converted internal magical elements themselves also have ranks, just like magical crystals. It seems that the efficiency of conversion into events increases with the growth of the magical element organ.]

<That means that the pattern registered as mine has already become different. ..... Do you think you can compare the patterns before and after?>

[I can't say for sure, but if we assume that the maximum length of the magic cold is one week, there is little difference in the patterns. It is still a dramatic change due to the long period of magical organ formation and polar crystallization.]

<I mean, it's pretty hard to unprotect and identify ..... without knowing my current magical patterns, eh!> Seina suddenly had a headache.

[Whoa, what's wrong?]

<That means that if they know my current magical element pattern, it's not good!>

It would be just like registering Seina's biometrics and then having those biometrics change. In other words, Seina would be a different person.

[Since we know Seina's initial pattern, it is possible to disguise it. However, if you use strong magic, the original pattern will appear, so you need to be careful.]

<.....What about the magical element fillings so far?>

[I just hope it won't be checked.]

<Ohhhhhh, the hidden things are getting more and more .....>

[But as long as Barigaru is involved, there must be some form of cover-up. I don't know how the magic crystals that are being filled every day are being used, but I think it is highly likely that the source of those who filled them is being hidden. Otherwise, it would be the same as announcing that a single person had filled such a large amount.]

<That's wishful thinking too.>

[At least someone of Barigaru's caliber should be aware of the magical element pattern. And he knows about Seina's magical organ.]

<Do you mean that you've already checked it? If so, the disguise of the magical element pattern is a dead end.>

[If that is the case, the biggest concern is the contact with that ward. If your true identity is revealed, you could make enemies of both the lord of this place and Barigaru.]

<If you are not aware of this, you will be suspected in many ways, but it could also be taken to mean that Barigaru has the intention of escaping.>

[I wonder how the access to the sky would look at night, ...?]

<That is a disgusting imagination. To the sky above could be considered space. Even though the point's travel speed is slow, you can still get to space in four hours.>

Of course, with the knowledge of the point and the spirit thread, but it could be taken as a contact with space pirates.

<If someone believed Kicha, I could be a suspect, but it helps that I didn't raise the ..... point directly above Barigaru's house. Had I done that, I would have been exposed in a single shot.>

If the coordinates of the grounding point were determined and the Barigaru residence was directly below it, there would be no excuse.

[We needed to see the whole area, including the other side of the mountain, so we decided that the best place to do that was near the top of the mountain, which was a good thing.]

<I would have done it if it had been me. ..... I still have to stay quiet and keep my head down here. I'm not sure how to get out of the wards in a natural way, but I guess the only way is to become a hunter-adventurer>.

[I guess we'll have to keep ZINV waiting]

<I'll have to apologize for that. Radio communication cannot be bypassed except for emergencies only, and if ZINV had a master key like Kiriko's Mizuki... ...>

[I think that communication is a surprisingly blind spot, but sure, it might be bad in this situation. Seriously... Demonstration is the only thing that's diligent.]

In the sky above, five Weak Knights could be seen in formation. They flew in this way regularly, only during the daytime when they could see well. It was just a threat to show that they were the ones in control of this place.

<Barigaru-san complained that they don't come at all when pirates attack, which is the most important time. No wonder they don't like people in the sky. To the people over here, we are all from the sky.>

The sky pirates attacked the night side of the planet. That's what the government of Abaryum, the continent of the sky, the same name as this planet, was using as an excuse for the delay in intercepting sky pirate raids.

<Points in the sky at night, you know. It's certainly a nasty combination of conditions>

[If the lords find out about Seina, you have two choices: run away or be in the position of a child owner. If you are in the position of a child owner, it could be quite troublesome, depending on the person you are dealing with. If they know that you are from the sky and that you are here for a reason, it will be even more troublesome.]

<Even if I escape, as long as I’m bound by the spell crest of the contract, my location will be identified immediately, won't it?>

[If we make enemies of both the lords and Barigaru at the same time, then it doesn't matter where Seina is as long as you continue to pay your debt to Barigaru.]

<But that would require doing something about these wards, which is the whole point, isn't it? Have you come up with anything?>

[If it's around a highway with frequent traffic, it may be possible to analyze it because there are many situation samples. Conversely, it might be possible to pass points and spiritual threads through that place.]

<Because of the frequent comings and goings, huh?>

[Points and Spirit Threads will not be detected unless they are activated. Of course, it will be detected during the movement of the point, but the change in composition may be gradual in that area. If you can read the pattern, move points before it changes and erase it before it changes. Since the point will be fixed where it moves...]

<Are you going to keep moving it steadily...? It's true that teleportation is only for a moment, so I think I can go. Of course, it's only a matter of being able to analyze it, but is it okay?>

[It is more likely to be visible than to be analyzed in the middle of nowhere.]

<I understand. But it's a nasty high-ranking opponent, so it's better to assume that he knows the weak points of his own warding. I ask you not to “stir up a hornet’s nest”. It's just an insurance policy in case they find out, so there's no need to overdo it.>

[Yes, handsome.]

For Nayuta, it was a chance to redeem herself, and she was happy to be of use to Seina.

<If you decide to do that, it's a garden after all. Let's have a little fun.>

The reason this place was treated as an annex to the museum was because the aristocrats in this mansion grew orchid-like flowers, which they brought in from outer space and crossbred with magic trees to create new varieties.

Like orchids and roses on Earth, these were so diverse that it was hard to believe that they were the same flower and crossbreeding them with the magic tree had further complicated their shapes. There were, of course, flowers of various colors, shapes, and patterns, but there were also those that bloomed underwater, those that would bear fruit, those that developed transparent petals with magical elements, those that glowed, and those that moved like living creatures.

Above all, many of them were so beautiful and delicate that one felt like sighing. In this fantasy world, it would not have been surprising if fairies swarmed around the place. They were said to come at night when no one was around, but they fled as soon as they heard anyone, so the only people who could actually see them were those in the pavilion where the flowers were grown.

[You can see them. It's pretty.]

When the magical element was visualized, humanoid figures less than ten centimeters in height, like a pale light, were swarming around the flowers.

<They look like butterflies.>

He could barely make out what looked like a face shape, the whole thing was blotchy and fuzzy. When people approached, they kept their distance, and when they passed by, they would repeatedly come close to the flowers again, but sometimes when children were present, they would gather there, and the children would scurry around, as if sensing something, too.

<.....That's great.>

Especially when a couple with a baby approached, they gathered around the baby, or if it was a pregnant woman, around her belly, like giant dandelion fluff.

<If it were the ocean or something, people would say, “Oh my God, that's a huge fungus.>

[Seina is the same kind of person who would think that.]

As expected, Nayuta looked aghast.

<But they're beautiful when they're flying around, but when they get ..... together too much, you know.>

Butterflies dancing wildly in a flower garden were beautiful, but when they gathered in large groups like monarch butterflies, and their weight sometimes breaks tree branches, it was kind of terrifying.

<Well, it's time to go home. The sun is still high enough, but the shadows are getting longer.>

[If we avoid this morning's path on the way back, we won't have to say goodbye, will we? I've been keeping track on my end, and I can tell you …]

<I've got an idea. You'll see.>

Seina was not good at remembering people's faces, but he was good at remembering directions. He followed the road they had come up in the opposite direction, and by the directions and the location of the buildings, he remembered the people Nana had taught him.

Chapter Eight: Back to Normal Again

[The spirit thread point and range designation is like a vacuum cleaner. When dust gathers, it makes a mountain, but it's not enough to just gather it up.]

Nayuta was demonstrating her abilities to the fullest, gathering up every herb she could find in the city, as well as any other weeds and bits of wood she could see through the visualization of magical elements that she did not understand. But without organization, any valuables were as good as trash.

<Because the spirit thread storage is not a garbage house.>

[It's useless to worry about it because there's nothing we can do without the raw materials. Because we have the component analysis of the magical element scan, if we collect various classification data now, it will be easier when we start working in the forest of magical trees.]

They were in the process of collecting various samples anyway, since the same components could be analyzed by the magical element scan.

What kind of ingredients were in what kind of things? What was it used for in this world?

They made the most of their favorite museums, visited the apothecary in town, etc., and were in the process of completing a lot of data on the major items.

[And data analysis and classification are my specialty, remember? While Seina-san is sleeping, I am working on it, so please concentrate on collecting the data.]

The vitality of this person was like watching Kiriko at full throttle.

<I'm worried about what you are doing while I'm sleeping. Every morning when I wake up, I'm surprised to find that the amount of magical elements in my body has increased.>

When he woke up in the morning, he was fully charged with magical elements, but the maximum number of magical elements was steadily increasing every morning. Although not as explosive as when the polar crystals were made, the maximum amount now exceeded 60 million. In other words, while Seina was sleeping, Nayuta was using magic to crystallize his magical essence in the shade of the forest without any restraint.

[You’re a handsome young man with a handsome wife♡]

How long would this young wife stay so innocent? He felt like making a joke like that, but anyway, there was no point in escaping from reality. Besides, he was afraid that Nayuta might break down in various ways if he used expressions such as “young wife”.

<I'm also afraid of the evolution of magical prostheses and organizing systems, and the number of things I don't know about is increasing .....>

The quality of Seina's magical body had become so advanced that it could not only stand and walk but was also mobile enough to engage in a mock battle with Seina. Furthermore, although it was not a living organism, it has an exterior that would be unnoticeable even if it were walking around town. As expected, Nana felt uncomfortable, but even Barigaru did not notice it.

[Now, at last, in my own form!]

<Sorry, rejected!>

As one might expect, Nayuta's appearance would stand out even more if she were allowed to walk around outside. Anyway, he managed to dissuade her from doing so, but either in reaction or out of frustration, the number of things Seina didn't know about was increasing in the classified folder of the spirit threads storage. There were so many things that Seina had opened one of them before, but had immediately closed it and decided not to look at it, like a mysterious witch's house that he didn't understand and was afraid to find out about.

But still, it was a good thing that she was there to “help out,” right?

Seina stopped prying, turned off the monitor, and tried to erase it from his memory.

<By the way, how is the investigation of the magical organ going?>

[With the analysis of the data obtained from the previous search, we don't know any more, but we can assume that Seina's personal data is stored for sure. The question is to what level, but at the very least, it should be possible to heal your body’s defects in “regeneration” from the neck down if there is a sufficient amount of magical material. However, for a more precise investigation, it is necessary to analyze the magical organs at a higher level.]

If the analysis was at the level of the nobleman's botanical garden or even higher, it was not a one-sided task. The upper limit of the number of magical elements increased by about 3 million even during the investigation, so if it was above that level, there was a high possibility that the amount of magical elements would increase by 10 million units if it was not done properly.

<Regeneration from the neck down is not creepy either. ..... Well, that one is not a pressing matter, so please direct that effort to another direction>.

[Csssshhhh...for 'inside help', right? I understand, ♡]

<Even if I told you not to do it, it's while I'm sleeping, so there's nothing I can do to stop you, and I guess it's a good thing I'm no longer bypassing you these days. ..... Well, if we don't hurry, Barigaru-san told me to go home early today, didn't he?>

Seina made sure no one was watching and increased his running speed a bit.

“Welcome home, Seina-san.”

“I found about thirty this morning. I don't know what's wrong with ..... at all, I take and take every day and I'm not getting any less.”

“Thanks for your help. I'll check back later and settle up.”

Seina entered through the back door that led to the kitchen and handed Nana, who greeted him, a plate recording the location of the traps, vegetables from the farm that morning, and a basket of meat from the market. This would be breakfast or dinner.

In this world, stew with a lot of ingredients was the main meal, because it was difficult to preserve perishable foodstuffs. There were refrigerators using magic crystals and magic boxes, but they were out of reach for the average person. Of course, Seina had a spirit thread storage, so it was possible to store food in its original state indefinitely, but it could not be used openly and was kept secret from both Nana and Barigaru.

Barigaru's house had a large magic box, but the reason why there were so many stew based dishes on the menu was because Barigaru was a person who liked to finish his meals in a short time. However, Nana was a good cook and had an extensive menu, so he was a little dissatisfied with the master's slothfulness.

[Please try to negotiate to get the unused magic bag as soon as possible in order to sell the organized medicinal herbs.]

<As for the debt, there's no need to be in such a hurry. Besides, the capacity is low.>

[Maybe we can analyze and increase the capacity. If you can also add a time freeze .....]

<Well, if I do that, I won't be able to use the magic bag in public. In addition, even the ring of misrecognition would be self-explanatory .....>

[Well, that's ours, and Seina said it was fine, right?]

<I only said that you could use the functions it has now. I thought I'd sell it in the unlikely event that you tinkered with it too.>

The magic that was recorded in the artifact of misrecognition, Nayuta analyzed it, rearranged the useless spells, added various functions, and increased its performance. Furthermore, the magic crystals were made into pure crystals, and their capacity was increased dramatically, making them even better than before. Of course, he had no intention of selling it at the moment, but in the unlikely event that he fall behind in his debt repayments, he intended to sell it.

<The contents that had to be disguised have increased considerably, and the capacity was not enough as it was, and I need to prepare for any eventuality!>

In fact, the number of materials and medicinal herbs in the spirit thread storage was quite large. As far as the apothecaries in town and the like were concerned, if they were to be released, it would likely cause a bit of a price collapse. The biggest problem was how to sell that quantity safely and stably for money. But in that case, it would be safer to think about selling to a wholesaler rather than a retailer.

[Get a few more magic crystals if you can, it would be appreciated in many ways.]

<But you have to be a hunter-adventurer to even get into the guild's sales department, and magic crystals are the most expensive piece of equipment. The problem of money to buy them in the first place is the biggest hurdle.>

Magic crystals and related items were valuable items that were only sold to members of the nobility and privileged classes, as well as people with hunter-adventurer certificates. Of course, there were dark routes for this kind of thing, but it was not something that was needed that quickly, and Seina has no contacts with such places and no money to begin with. And it was obvious that it was not a good idea to get involved with that kind of place.

<Well, the magic bag is not ready yet. We can use it for stockpiling, just not for public use. Best to go slow and steady.>

Seina was also stockpiling vegetables and meat that he received, in addition to wild plants he found on the way to deliveries. He mainly stored vegetables and other things that Barigaru didn't like and Nana couldn't eat. He also caught wild bird eggs and fish.

“Oh, you're back. How's your body feeling?”

The back door of the house led to Barigaru's blacksmithing workshop in the basement. After finishing his pre-breakfast work, Barigaru quenched his throat, which was burning from the heat of the furnace, with a chilled concoction of a sports drink mixed with salt and fruit juices.

“Good, I'm not sick anymore. My appetite has stabilized, too.”

He was especially happy that his bowel movements had decreased in frequency. At one point, he was passing more than he was eating.

“I feel like I fit in with the people in town.”

“I'm glad you've adjusted. So, how was your day?”

“I found about 30 suspicious things.”

“Good, good. That's all the more reason to pick you up. By the way, now that your physical condition and life are in order, I think it's time for you to start training as a hunter-adventurer, don't you?

“At last!”

A major event in the fantasy world. It was the most important factor, without which it would not have begun.

[That's a shame indeed. If I were an entity, I'd get the promise of 'that woman is too good for that kid'.]

<I don't want that promise! ..... Well, if you were an entity, you might have the promise of having a 'body like a sprout'.>

[Fufu, I'm looking forward to Bio-Enhancement and magical element enhancement .....]

Seina was on a tear with the double enchantment enhancement. Well, it couldn't really be that obvious, but since this was the moment he had been waiting for, you'll have to forgive him for being a little paranoid.

“..... Someone looks happy, but you are one step short of becoming a hunter-adventurer, the half of a half-human.” Barigaru's smirking face was firmly on his face, as he poured cold water on Seina.

“What? Half of a half?”

“It's an apprentice's apprenticeship. It's the first step for a hunter-adventurer, though. I'll take this opportunity to let you have the magic bag. Gahahaha!”

Barigaru laughed happily and loudly as he clapped Seina's shoulders with a bang as his shoulders slumped as he gulped.

Chapter Nine: The First Step of Half a Man's Half a Man

The magic bag Barigaru handed him was a belt pouch-type bag for storing small items. It was an old type of magic bag with a used dark green crocodile-like skin, partially reinforced with metal and engraved with magic circles in demon's blood, which could not be seen from the front. Usually used as a glove compartment, it led to multiple compressed subspaces when activated by magic. One bag was the size of a wardrobe, and in the case of this bag, three subspaces were fixed.

<But then again, I never thought I'd be able to stick my hand in and take them out. ..... How primitive and wonderful. It really feels like a storage unit.>

[Don't put it together with the spirit thread storage. Still, it's quite gratifying to be able to hold three wardrobes' worth of stuff without worrying about the weight.]

The space at the entrance could be expanded to the size of the case, so you could see inside, but usually you just stuck your hand in and pulled out what you needed. So, unless you were very lazy, you could customize it by making your own dividers, accessory compartments, and platforms for weapons, etc. to fit the items you wanted to put inside for ease of use.

<Surprisingly, that sounds like fun too.>

The people of Masaki Village bought materials at a home improvement center and built their own furniture, shelves for organizing daily necessities, and even house additions and renovations. They could adjust the height, size, etc. for their own convenience, and most of all, they enjoyed thinking about it. In the olden days, it was commonplace to do so, and everyone's house was equipped with proper carpentry tools.

Seina, watched Barigaru's back as he walked, patting the magic bag that was now his, happily following along.

[But this one can automatically recharge the magic element and maintain its functionality semi permanently. This is an advantage over the latest magic bag of magic crystals.]

The skin of the demon collected the magical element and charged it into the magic circle drawn with the demon's blood, maintaining the subspace. Of course, to open the gate to it, you had to activate the magic. But thanks to its effect, even if it was left unattended, the objects inside would not be lost.

[Ring and bracelet types are always in contact with the skin, so they are auto filled. Even if they are removed, if the magic crystals are refilled, they can be maintained for several decades. People who can afford such equipment don't care about the cost of filling it.]

<kk! I feel like I'm bragging about my solar-powered calculator to a guy who uses spreadsheets on his computer ..... I certainly understand that magic crystal technology is revolutionary ..... But you don't think that spirit threads have been put to practical use, do you? I didn't realize that they had also made storage practical.>

When Barigaru told him about the latest magic bag, he found out that there was an infinite storage unit that used a transfer gate from a book he saw in the library.

<It's an appropriation of something that actually exists. If only someone had come up with the idea, it would have been Columbus' egg.>

However, unlike Seina's spirit thread storage, the size of this storage was quite large, as it utilized a gate for transportation. To begin with, the magic circle itself that fixed the gate was huge, and only something like a safe that was fixed in place could be built. And unlike Seina's spirit thread storage, it was not possible to manage detailed receipts and disbursements. The only way to store things was to put them in a huge case and move them in and out, so although it was infinite, it could only hold one case.

<I didn't think that the museum had one of these, though. But it sure is a good way to store the collection.>

Barigaru said that the infinite storage in the basement was huge, like a train, with several containers connected to each other.

<But it was good to hear about the latest and greatest in the old Magic Bags while I was learning how to use them.>

[It was especially informative on how to get things out of the bag.]

The newest magic bag required you to touch the object when you put it in. And just like Seina's spirit thread storage, the image of the object was recorded in the magic crystals during the storage process. Even if the person who put the item in the bag forgot it, the inventory was recorded in the magic crystal, so by touching it and imaging it, the list of stored contents could be viewed at any time, and as long as it was registered, even other people could know the inventory and retrieve it.

<What was all that thinking? It's like, ...>

[But I've made a lot of interesting inventions in the process of thinking about it, so it's not a waste of time.]

<I know. I know. There have been many cases in which technologies that we gave up on as useless turned out to be very powerful if we had just changed our point of view. I'm just amazed that such a roundabout and troublesome idea has been made possible by magic.>

[Ch, indeed.]

Seina and Nayuta looked at each other and chuckled. Despite their many differences, their gears were finally beginning to mesh.

“Kid, this is where we're entering today.”

“So it's not the same as the guild entrance?”

Barigaru pointed not to the main building of the Hunters and Adventurers Guild, which looked like an old stone bank, but to a large staircase just beside it.

“This is another guild facility. It leads to a place you know.”

The staircase was a spiral type, leading vertically to the basement. The air was a bit cooler as he followed Barigaru down the stairs, and the sound of water and miscellaneous smells began to waft through the air. It was nostalgic for Seina, similar to the smell of his parents' old store before he went to space. Then, the view suddenly opened up and a place that looked like a huge shopping mall appeared below.

“I didn't realize such a big place was underground ..... at all.”

“Isn't it more down the hill where you always received meat for delivery? There's a building above ground that way.”

Seina gazed admiringly at the huge space, which looked a little scary, like an underground drainage facility in Tokyo. Somewhere there was a window for lighting, or daylight was coming in, and besides that, the magic crystal lights were on.

“And even then, it's underground, so there are a lot of lights. Are you okay with the cost of filling them or something?”

“Gahahahaha! Half of them are the ones you’re filling every night.”

“I was wondering why you bring in so many every night, but it's for the lighting here?”

“With the magic crystals here, even if you’re filling a large amount, I can always misrepresent who's doing it and where the payment is coming from. And I have regular orders. This is a semi-subterranean facility that used to be a quarry, so there are a lot of inconveniences without lighting. Cheap magic tree and magic oil lamps aren't very bright, and there's the hassle of daily refilling, turning lights on and off, and the danger of fire.”

And with that, Barigaru began to proceed along the wooden and metal bridge built into the hollow.

<This is the site of a stone quarry. Looks like good stone, doesn't it?>

The walls of the space were not dug as buildings, but the entire surface was left as it was quarried. Nayuta's eyes shone when she saw it, similar to the eyes of Airi and Washu who found something interesting, which Seina also remembered all too well.

<Weigh yourself. If an amateur picks an unintentional spot, it could collapse.>

[I want the best part possible ..... so we can build our own home for the two of us.]

<Listen to me! And it's not like we need a house right away, so just wait a little longer. Either way, if you cut out that much, you're in big trouble.>

Cutting it out with the magical element range teleportation was instantaneous. A huge cut-out mark with a smooth, perfectly polished cut surface would be the source of a great deal of fuss.

“This place is also a meat butchering and processing plant that takes advantage of the abundant underground water. The temperature underground is constant all year round, so it's ideal for aging and storage. Of course, in addition to meat, it also serves as a storage facility for fresh produce, making it the largest market in and around the city. Well, it's the center of the city's food and economy.”

“At this scale, you could call it an underground city, couldn't you?”

“It has a history of being a magic shelter during wars with other countries. And since the temperature is constant, some people spend the middle of summer here.”

“It sure is a nice place, isn't it?”

It felt a little chilly, but you could always put more clothes on.

“We've already taken all the stone out of this area, but there's still some mining going on in the back, so don't go too far in.”

[Okay, let's go!]

Seina silently ignored Nayuta's prodding. “Yeah, I'll be careful, but are you sure there won't be any collapses or anything?”

“Gahahahaha! Mining is properly calculated there. This large cavity is supported by sufficient pillars and structures added later. And there are building restrictions on above-ground buildings, so no more buildings can be built on the mountain. When a building is rebuilt or extended, it is obliged to be made of lighter materials. It's pretty heavy, but it's lighter than it looks.”

“That's a relief to hear. ..... So, where the heck are you going with that?”

“Oh, right there.”

He could smell the good smells and hear the kids hustling and bustling a little while ago, but when he went out the other side of the wall partition, he saw a large cafeteria downstairs. There were nearly a thousand kids there, ranging in age from first grade to middle school, eating.

“Those are the kids who are going to be working with you.”

“..... eh!”

Seina was more surprised by the fact that even the kids, who he would describe as still very young, were reserve hunter-adventurers than by the fact that they were going to become Seina's friends.

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Further down the hall, there was a large auditorium, and one of the rooms attached to the auditorium was a reference room, where items that looked like hunting tools, files, scrolls, etc., which he did not know what they were used for, were neatly arranged on shelves.

<It looks like a reference room.>

[It looks like a room in that museum.]

The room was at the bottom of the hill, so there was plenty of bright sunlight streaming in through the windows.

“You know the pitto, don't you?”

“Yes, I saw it in the demon book. That's the meat I hand out every morning, right?”

The pitto was an herbivorous demon similar to a guinea pig, about 40 centimeters long. It was timid and basically nocturnal and lived in burrows in the ground. Its magical organs were small, so its main materials were meat and fur.

“Ah. They are the demons that support not only us, but also the whole ecosystem of the magical sea of trees. They are more fertile than goblins and multiply quickly. They are also the main cause of the spread of the Sea of Magic.”

“Do they transport seeds and pollen?”

“That's one of the main factors, but they often cause small-scale stampedes. They increase in numbers where they live, and when they become saturated, the surplus pittos move en masse to other areas, where they multiply again. If the land is inhabited, they cause a feeding frenzy, and demons that feed on the pittos gather there. Then, even stronger demons will gather in search of them and exterminate the people. If it becomes an uninhabited field, it will become a forest of demon trees and a dense forest in a few years, slowly expanding its habitat.”

“That's a nuisance, isn't it?”

“The children are the ones who can prevent that from happening at the water's edge and secure a large amount of meat.”

“Oh ..... so the reserve army of hunter-adventurers… That doesn't sound very realistic.”

“Gahahahaha! Don't underestimate them just because they're kids. The children harvest 40% of this market, if we limit ourselves to pittos alone. Of course, it's not just children, but adults as well. It's a good source of retirement income for retired hunters and adventurers, and it's also a good source of offseason income for farmers.”

“Forty percent is certainly a lot.”

“Oh. And as far as those kids are concerned, it also means welfare.”

“Work and that meal they just had?”

“Yes. The harvest money paid to the children is tax-free, and if there are problems at home, the guild will take care of the money and give it to them when they come of age. Whether or not they become hunter-adventurers in the future, it will help them prepare for that time. As for meals, as long as they work, they will receive breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Of course, this is up to the convenience of each family, but some of the children eat three meals here and sleep in an empty space in the basement. There are also classes to teach them how to read and write, so the literacy rate is quite high.”

[That's got a lot of advantages on the lords' side.]

“That's a good system, but is it safe to kill demons in the first place? There were quite a few small children, you know?”

“Even though it's called extermination, it's really systematized trap hunting. The adults are in charge of collecting and transporting the pittos, and they are also in charge of patrolling the area. Above all, the children have access to a special place.”

When you say special, do you mean systematized?

“Although not visible from the center of the town, there is a buffer zone of open land between the fields and the Sea of Magic Trees that covers the perimeter of the town. There are no demon trees there, so dangerous demons rarely come out. As far as I know, there are only a few cases a year when other demons appear in the area, and they are quickly exterminated by the adults in charge of collecting and transporting the traps. The most important thing is that it is much easier to work with.”

Barigaru pointed to a shelf in the reference room. There, a long, thin, sturdy-looking cloth bag and what looked like a bellows were on display.

“Pitto burrows, like those of other animals, have many entrances and exits. We block some of them with these bag traps. Then, through another doorway, you can go to .....”

Barigaru held something like a bellows and moves it lightly.

Buuuuuuuuuuut!

Despite the light movement, there was quite a noise in the room.

“..... and threaten them with this bubuda, and the pittos will rush to the exit where there is no sound. That's how we're going to round them up.”

“That bubuda? That's quite a sound.”

“It's said to mimic the sound of their natural enemies breaking into their burrows, but I'd be surprised if someone made that noise on my doorstep, hahahahahaha! Anyway, it is important to read the burrow and where to set the trap. And the timing of the sound is also important. The party of three hunt in a plot of about 200 meters on each side. The density of the nests is surprisingly high, so it's a full day's work.”

“Does three people have some special meaning? If it's just the kids, I'm sure a larger group would be fine. .....”

“Because that's the number of people to foster cooperation and because this was the most efficient way to do it. Bubuda is not something that can be sounded by a large number of people. On the contrary, they may panic and lock themselves inside the den. It is important to lead them to an escape route. Traps are the same way. The most efficient way is to set three traps and threaten them with three bubudas. But you have to try it out.”

“How big is the den? The more entrances and exits, the more difficult it will be to select them, and it seems like it would be hard to find them in the first place?”

“That's where this location has an advantage.”

Barigaru grinned and pulled out a file from the reference cabinet and unfolded it. It showed a map of the burrows, and surprisingly, the burrows were so tightly packed together that there were no gaps between them.

“It's a map showing the location of all the burrows. It's not perfect because they may dig new holes, but I update it every time there is a change. That alone gives you an idea of the vantage point of this place, right?”

“I see, so it's systematized. ..... But if there's something like this, I'm sure we'll eradicate it soon.”

“Gahahahaha! Don't knock the fertility of the pittos. The buffer zone is quite large to begin with, so it's impossible to cover the entire area every day. It takes six days for all the people engaged in pitto hunting, including adults, to go around the whole area, and no matter how hard we try to catch them, more keep coming in from the sea of magical trees. No matter how many pittos we catch day after day, the nest is full by the sixth day. I don't know if that's good or bad, but they are an excellent meat resource.”

“Then, with this high density, it looks like there will be a lot of feeding damage.”

“That's why we planted geophyte moss in the buffer zone, so it's not so bad. Ah, geophyte moss is a general term for mosses that grow on magical energy. It grows extremely fast, and no matter how much the pittos devour it will grow back in two days. Although it is a magical tree, if the soil is improved with this moss, any wasteland can be fully harvested in about five years. The drawback is that it needs to be burned every year before planting, but the burned moss is a good fertilizer and does not cause crop failure. It's an important resource, just like the pittos.”

“That's also well done.”

“Maybe it's another one of those magical element life support systems. And the pittos that come to the buffer zone are mainly weak and young individuals who could not have a territory in the magical sea of trees, so that is also an advantage for the children.”

“I see, so there are a lot of favorable conditions.”

Young, inexperienced individuals were less cautious. And if they were weak, they were less of a threat.

“That's right. That's why some of them earn as much as adults. That's why problems arise, though.”

The last part was somewhat like a soliloquy, and Seina felt like he just said it without being conscious of it.

“Problems?”

“Anyway, let me introduce you to the kids who will be the kid's party.”

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“These are the kids who will be in your party.”

After the explanation, Barigaru invited a boy and the girl into the room. The girl was taller and older than the boy, but they were both in elementary school.

“Nice to meet you, I'm Seina.”

“If you feel like you've been forced into trouble, you can run away as soon as you can, brother.”

The boy did not take the offered hand, but suddenly and gruffly cut him off. His eyes were wide-awake, as if he had given up on something.

“Chito!

I'm going first!”

Despite the girl's rebuke, the boy called Chito quickly averted his gaze and walked out of the reference room.

“Sorry, Seina. I'll go ahead of you. ..... Oh, I'm Gushuka and that boy is called Chito. Nice to meet you too.”

The girl's hair was cut short, and she seemed quiet, but her firm speech and neat bow reminded him of Kiriko. The problem was the boy with the shaggy head and wizened eyes.

“He has various small scars on his face, doesn't he?”

It was normal for a country boy to have scars and cuts on his face and arms and legs. But Chito's wounds were clearly more numerous, and his injuries were unnatural. Seina, who was an expert on injuries caused by natural disasters and the like, could tell at once that the wounds were man-made.

“Chito's father is here for a reason. He is a hunter-adventurer on indefinite leave due to an injury.”

“On indefinite leave? That's a strange way of putting it, isn't it?”

“He became a hunter-adventurer and steadily rose through the ranks, never failing. He became so conceited that he took on unreasonable requests and failed. It is a common story for young hunter-adventurers, but if they have never experienced anything like failure before, even after their injuries are healed, their fear and pride often get in the way, and they often end up rotting. In addition, if a child's income is good, it is easy for him or her to live off of it. And the target is not limited to their own children.”

“And not just to the other kids in the party?”

Barigaru gave a small nod in response to Seina's question.

“Complain about the distribution. ..... With parents like that, it's hard to get kids to form a party, and there's no one to partner with. Even though he's corrupt, he used to be a medium-ranked hunter-adventurer, so even if he's an adult, he's not a good partner for the average civilian to start with.”

“But what about that girl? She doesn't look like a sibling to me?”

“Their parents are former party members. And they are in the top class, so they can't touch her. That girl is a year older than Chito, and she was hunting with another party, but she couldn't bear to see him like this, so she formed a party for us .....”

“If three is the basic rule, you're missing one. So, it’s on me, is it?”

“Yes, but ..... before that, Chito's presence here itself is starting to become a problem. There was an organization that used to threaten the children directly and force them to give up their income, and some of the parents are afraid that Chito's presence here will cause the same thing.”

“Can't the guild do something about it? And what about your former organization?”

“We destroyed that one, so now it's your turn.” Barigaru put his hand on Seina’s shoulder with a bang, as if he knew what to do.

“..... Oh, me? I'm in that role, sir?”

“This is the test to become a hunter-adventurer. Our main job is to kill and capture demons, but we also do a lot of miscellaneous work as a rough-and-tumble shop. And if we form a party, this kind of trouble is bound to happen.”

[It's typical of Seina that things don't go smoothly. But still, that boy ..... is a complete name-dropper.]

<It doesn't mean the same thing over here. I see...that's what he meant when he lent me his magic bag.> Seina let out a small sigh as he heard Barigaru's high pitched laugh.

“Gahahahaha! The duration is one month. I'm asking you to do it.”

“I'll do my best.”

Seina changed his mind and headed to the meeting place in the auditorium, knowing from past experience that it would be futile to argue with him.

And there he encountered the abominable past.

“..... Oh. Oh, yes, I'm sure it will.”

The figure of Chito and Gushuka standing alone, a little apart from the children who were partying and talking harmoniously with each other, was the very figure of the old Seina.

He was a lonely child, shunned because of his bad luck. If he had not met Kiriko, Tsukiko, Tenchi, and the rest of the Masaki’s, he didn’t know what would have happened to him. His parents were also mentally trapped, and even the worst-case scenario was a real possibility.

[Are you sure? Possibly, there could be some nasty people involved.] Nayuta asked, sensing Seina's determination.

<Well, that's exactly what always happens, you know.>

[Well, that's what they always do. When I see you like that, I can't say no.]

Seina agreed with Nayuta and approached them smiling.

“Here you go. Let's have a light meeting then.”

“You don't mind, do you? You heard that, right?” The girl named Gushuka asked with a surprised look on her face, which was quite surprising to Chito.

“I'll give it a try. By the way, I'll take 80% of the proceeds. Is that okay?”

“Whoa, hey! No way, right? That's just too much ..... for me, I can't help it, but big sis Gushuka .....!”

Chito's resentment was less about himself and more about the girl. But Gushuka restrained Chito's indignation.

“It's okay. If you don't party with us, you don't get paid.”

“Because .....”

He smiled as if to reassure her, then looked at Seina with that same smile.

“Seina, that's fine. Please take care of us.” He bowed politely.

“Okay. I'll ask .....Gushuka to do the lottery.”

“Okay.”

Gushuka bowed slightly to Seina and headed for the lottery which had begun on the auditorium platform.

“..... You're just like my father, aren't you?” Chito muttered to Seina. It was more a murmur of resignation than hatred.

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“Che! I knew that's where the woods were getting in. I had a bad feeling because of the strange layout of the burrows.”

The moment they arrived at the hunting ground and saw the woods in the plot, Chito's expression turned into a full-blown frown.

Seina and his partners had drawn not only a flat area, but also a place where regular woods encroached. The map given to them at the auditorium only showed the location of the nests, so they did not know the reason for the blank areas and distorted nest layout until they arrived at the site. Gushuka, with her long experience, felt she knew, but Chito's experience was shallow due to his father's problems.

“What is the problem?”

“Because of the tree roots, the nests are complicated and hard to read. So the forest part tends to be an afterthought, and the maps are inaccurate or not researched.”

“You're right, there was no entry for the nest in the wooded area .....” Seina visualized the magical element and looked at it.

<There are so many reactions to medicinal herbs and various other things that it's hard to check. The identification of internal and external magical elements can be done at .....> Seina visualized

the magic elements and colored them. The external element was white, and the internal element was red. This was another newly developed magic.

<..... And the problem with this one is that it resets with a single blink. It would be nice if it could scan all the time .....>

The identification of internal and external magical elements consumed a lot of magical elements, unlike visualization. He tried it before in the same way as visualization and was instantly disoriented. This was due to a sudden shortage of magical elements, which occurred when scanning for identification was performed over a distance of infinity in the case of no designation.

In the first place, simply looking at an object with the eyes and perceiving it as information were two completely different things. When reading a book or working on a computer, one's field of vision was extremely narrowed in order to comprehend what was being read. It was even easier to understand when you considered the danger of working on a cell phone. If the field of vision and the amount of information that came in was unlimited, it was no wonder that he had depleted his magical elements and his brains felt like it was about to go flat.

[It would be easier if we could link to my mother's data..... unfortunately.]

He ignored Nayuta's boastful remarks.

He then specified the area to be scanned and narrowed down the range, but of course, places out of the range were not visible, so he set up multiple patterns. One was a fixed display pattern with a fixed range, and the other was a pattern in which the range varied in accordance with his line of sight. Although it was now possible to see the magic element at all times, it was not possible to recognize what kind of being the owner of the internal magic element was. This information was currently being collected in order to infer the target from the behavior pattern, the amount of magical elements, and the shape of the magical element distribution.

<It is easy to locate the nest if we make it a static information and increase the accuracy of scanning, right?>

The nest itself had nothing to do with magical elements, so he couldn’t see the nest itself, but underground roots, insects, and even microorganisms tended to accumulate magical elements, albeit in minute quantities, and the number of magical elements in the nest was slightly higher than that in the hole. By comparing internal and external magical elements, it was possible to identify the nest, and Nayuta existed to handle such a process.

<Let's not do that. If we look into it, it won't be good for them, and that's how we found it in the first place. But ..... what's with the rather strong reactions in some places? It doesn't look like a pitto, but you don't think it's a demon?>

[It's probably some kind of medicinal herb since there is no movement at all. But I haven't seen anything with such a strong reaction in town, so by all means, let's dig in later and check! By all means!!!] Nayuta was enthusiastic about the possibility of obtaining new samples. Seina was not opposed to this.

“Seina-san. Let's start with the flatlands first. We don't want to alarm the pitto, so please move as quietly as possible. I will read the nest.”

Gushuka whispered to Seina, who was staring silently into the woods. Either way, they had to start working to make money. The children had already started hunting in the other plots.

“Oh, sorry. Then let's start. In this case, is there a specific nest to start from?”

“The rule is that every party should start from the top left, facing the direction of the Magic Sea of Trees. That way, even if we alert the pittos in the next block, they will have calmed down by the time that team moves to that spot.”

“Understood.”

Seina and the others moved to where Gushuka said and began attacking the first den.

<Oh my, there are quite a few. There are too many compared to the size of the burrow, so they must be shelters rather than dwellers.>

The number of pittos he had identified through visualization of the magical elements was quite large. Normally, an appropriate number of pittos should live in a family unit, but there were clearly an excessive number of pittos, not only in this nest, but in many other nests.

[They must have been kicked out of the sea of magic trees and are now using the area as a short-term shelter. Maybe when things settle down a bit there will be some territorial disputes]

<This must also mean that this is a good hunting ground.>

[After that, maybe the abundant food supply will keep them from fighting. By the way, the moss here is like a fluffy carpet.]

Various kinds of mosses were growing in tight spaces, and they were quite thick. Moreover, it seemed that the magic element was used only for restoration, and was concentrated in the marks that seemed to have been eaten here and there, and there was almost no reaction in other places. Thanks to this, it didn't interfere with the appearance of the pitto in the ground, which was gratifying.

“Sis, if it's the layout of the nest, I'll remember everything.” Chito seemed a little exasperated, perhaps from impatience to hurry.

“It's not just the layout, I have to find out which entrances and exits are being used.” Gushuka admonished Chito in a whisper as they moved along on tiptoe.

The map of the plots given to each child was a rough copy of the original in the reference room, a large map made of long, thin pieces of wood. The plot was divided into about four scrolls, and the layout was engraved on them. If there was any change in the condition of the nest, it was carved with a knife that Gushuka carried. And if there was a change after the hunt, she would update the map in the archives.

Paper was not that valuable in this world, but since she was a child and the field work was outside, she does not want it to get dirty or torn.

[She is are very skilled at this, isn’t she you? She made sure they don't go over the nests.]

<But they still seem to be wary of us to some extent.>

As soon as Gushuka approached, the underground pittos stopped moving slightly and seemed to be on the lookout. They seemed to resume their activity as soon as the footsteps became distant.

<I wonder if the lack of alertness in this area is because they are young individuals.>

[Yes. More importantly, there is a passageway that is not on the map, and one passageway is blocked, what do you want to do?]

It was a passage a little longer than the others, with the exit hidden behind a slight rise; Gushuka also seemed to feel something strange and tilted her head slightly at the doorway of the blocked passage.

<If you're wondering, I can help.> Seina gently approached the new doorway and motioned to Gushuka.

Gushuka checked the hole, smiled happily, nodded, and returned to the waiting area where Chito was waiting.

“Brother, what are you doing? There's no den over there, man.”

“Seina-san found a new passageway for us. But how did you know?”

“Gushuka noticed something strange too, didn't you?”

“I'm not sure if I noticed it ....., but I found a good spot.”

She immediately began setting traps around the newly found doorway. The trap bag was crafted so that the entrance was held open by a metal ring, just like the mouth of a carp streamer. The trap bag was secured with long pegs so that it was close to the entrance and exit of the nest. The geo-synthetic moss was soft, so the pegs needed to be long enough to reach the hard ground.

They couldn’t use a hammer or similar tool because they didn’t want to alarm the pitto, but with Seina's strength, it was possible to slowly push the peg into the ground.

Once the preparations were made, all that remained was to scare them with the bubudas. Using the hand signals they had been taught in advance, they gently moved to their respective positions and sounded them at the right time.

Bubiiiiiiiiiiiiii! Bubby! Bubby! Bubby!

The reverberating sound in the den was terrific, but outside it was surprisingly small. Inside the small space of the den, it must have been a tremendous explosion. And then, from the ground, they heard the rumbling of the pitto escaping, and the trap bag that they had set up went on the rampage like a giant snake.

[A little bit is good.]

Nayuta sent a magic element point into the den to guide the pittos toward the trap. The result was that all the pittos in the den were now in the trap bag.

“We did it! Amazing ......!”

Chito cheered as they struggled to get into the full bag, but the human voice alerted the pittos; Chito was silenced by a single glare from Gushuka, but her mouth was full of smiles as well.

<Don't take it too far. It's not good for these girls.>

[This is the first benefit. You seemed to be depressed about a lot of things, so you need to lift their spirits a little. I'll add or subtract next time.]

The pittos that were captured would be put into cages at each party base, and the collectors would come around periodically to carry them away. It would be nice if the water tanks at the base could be refilled with drinking water at that time. After all, they worked all day long and needed a lot of water. However, it was time-consuming to go to a distant relay base every time they needed to fill up. In addition, when leaving the auditorium in the morning, they were given a dried, salty fruit-like substance to replenish their salt levels, which was another indication that this was a well-managed place.

The captured pittos were collected in the relay base warehouse and transported to the guild's market, where they were quickly processed into meat and other products. Further in the underground market was a ripening room, where the meat was said to be ready to eat the next morning, but there were also cases where the meat was further ripened at home.

[This is well thought out. It's really systematized and well set up.]

<You can rest assured that it is well organized. I also think it's to teach them how important it is to prepare and set up the hunting situation.>

[I see. I see. That's something that only Seina, the master of trouble, could have realized.]

After that, the work continued without any problems, and by mid-morning the hunt on the plains was almost complete. The fact that the adult Seina was in charge of the heavy lifting, such as transporting the captured pittos, also resulted in a modest time savings.

“It's a little early, but let's go get lunch. I think we should let the place rest a bit too.”

After the hunt on the plains was over, Gushuka suggested that they head to the large warehouse at the relay base that served as the home base for the hunt. This was a stone warehouse, twice the size of a gymnasium, built at regular intervals in the buffer zone. It also served as a storage place for heavy cargo, such as cages, which were troublesome to transport. On the second floor, a large number of people could rest and eat.

<The end of this buffer zone is the boundary of the warding area.>

The soldiers' station near the boundary that Seina saw was also attached to this warehouse.

<They must be guarding the children as well.>

“Seina-san. The pace is good, so let's eat here.”

The meals handed out were bento style. It was wrapped in the leaves of the magic tree that was also used in the pitto meat, and the drinks were in water bottles made of a plant that resembled bamboo. The children who received the food went upstairs, while others went directly to the site.

<Is this quantity ..... really for children?>

The lunch box consisted of a sandwich with pitto meat ham, vegetables, and a sauce similar to curry, and water slightly flavored with the juice of a magical tree. What surprised him was that the sandwich was just the right amount for Seina, whose appetite had subsided.

<I guess this is their usual amount, since everyone else seems to be eating normally>.

Upstairs, the children were eating their meals in their own groups. They looked at Seina for a moment, but then went right back to talking. They were talking about their hunting know-how, their reflections, and so on.

[Gushuka is the same way, but she is more articulate than her age. This is how she is building her foundation as a hunter-adventurer.]

<She's quite dependable.>

The atmosphere of avoiding Chito was not as blatant as it was in the morning, perhaps because Seina and Gushuka were with him. But Seina sat a little further away from the kids.

“It's a pretty nice view.”

The first-floor windows were empty, but the second-floor windows were filled with glass, and the second floor would be warm enough in the winter. Being a warehouse, the building was quite tall, and the ceiling was quite high, as the first floor was a workshop. The second floor was equivalent to the third or fourth floor of a private house, so it had a good view and was a good place to eat.

“By the way Gushuka, your nest reading is amazing. Did someone teach you?”

Most of the trap locations, surprise positioning, etc., were Gushuka's suggestions.

“My father is a hunter-adventurer and he teaches me a lot of secrets. I'm proud of the fact that my childhood record of catches by compartment hasn't been broken yet, and even though I'm not with my dad at ....., I've never caught so many before.”

“But it's the woods that are left, man.”

In contrast to Gushuka's joy at the harvest, Chito was pessimistic, perhaps thinking ahead.

“Thinking about the future, it's good to have a good experience in a place where conditions are tough,” he said.

“My father says the same thing. The conditions are so good here that it seems like a lot of people would lose a lot of their income if they could only hunt in difficult places when they grow up.”

“You say that, though. .....”

“The only reason why the results can vary between good and bad locations is because of lack of ability and experience. Trying to figure out how to cover up a bad situation through trial and error is for the future, and you should enjoy it.”

“Hehe, Seina, you really are just like my father.”

“..... Chh. I'm a kid anyway.”

“Envy and envy of others..... are feelings we all have, but don't use them as an excuse to put others down or to slack off yourself. The first person you should compete with is the person you were yesterday. Are you losing today? Have you grown even a little? Luck is important, but what is more important is that you are good enough to catch the good fortune that comes your way.”

“Because, ...”

“Money and things will disappear, but the abilities and experiences you have acquired will not. It takes effort to keep them from getting rusty, but it's better to be able to do something about it with your own will.”

The dark look Seina gave for a moment took both Gushuka and Chito's breath away, and while Seina's was like a powerful medicine for children, it also made his words more persuasive.

“.....Seina, did you do that, too?”

“Not just me. We all are. It's just that where you're standing and where you're going are two different things. It's the same that just standing still won't get you anywhere.”

Gushuka nodded her head in agreement, while Chito, still pessimistic about his environment, looked down and thought.

“Anyway, what we need to do now is conquer the forest. Great.”

From Seina's point of view, Chito's unhappiness was minor, but it was still a serious and big concern for him. That's why he didn't just say, “Work hard,” but instead presented a clear goal in front of him.

“.....Uh, yeah.”

“Okay! By the way, Gushuka, are we allowed to gather anything other than pittos? For example, can we pick medicinal herbs in that forest?”

And suddenly the pressure was gone from Seina. This kind of on/off is a skill he learned unconsciously around Seto.

“What? Yeah, I don't have a problem if it's in the plot, but if you sell it, you have to pay taxes if it's not a pitto, so I'll just focus on hunting unless I have a good reason”

“Yeah. Well, when you're done, can you give me some time?”

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<..... Ugh, I'm getting a little preachy here.>

[That is also the duty of elders. How you sublimate it is up to you, but since they seem to be listening, it won't be in vain.]

Not only Seina but also Gushuka and even Chito finished that lunch boxes and went to the forest.

“To catch pittos in the forest, you still need to know the location of their burrows. Let's start from where the location is marked.”

Only a small portion of the forest burrows were marked. They were concentrated around the borders of the plains, where they were relatively easy to find.

“If the forest pittos aren't hunted much, that means they could have lived there for a long time and become large, right?” Seina said to stop them from going to work.

“Yes, I think so.”

“Then maybe we should find a beast trail. If they've been there for so long, there must be a set path and a trail that's been made, right?”

“Yes. But I heard it's hard to tell from above because of the grass tunnel shape. ..... Perhaps you could do a survey of the nest?”

“I was looking at the nests on the plains, and I was thinking that the entrances and exits are arranged in such a way that they don't conflict with other nests, right?”

“What? .....Yes, if you put it that way .....”

“Ah! Yes, that's right. It was like that.”

Surprisingly, it was Chito who responded.

“Well, it was the same with the location of the den, but Chito has a good memory,” Seina said.

“There are some things I'd rather forget ..... but let's hurry up or else .....”

“Let's start with the nest first.” Seina said firmly.

“But, because then .....”

“We have to think not only about ourselves, but also about the children after us. That's how the map at headquarters was created in the first place, right?”

“Yes, that's right. I understand.”

Chito seemed a little confused, but Gushuka smiled and nodded in agreement. This reaction showed how much influence her father has had on her.

“I can't believe I'm looking for a nest in these woods .....”

“In times like this, you have to take it one at a time and make sure you finish them one by one. At the worst, it's okay if all you do today is investigate.

He admonished Chito, who looked at the forest and seemed to be in despair. The sheer volume of work was staggering when you looked at it as a whole, but in the end, you just had to get it done one at a time. If you rushed into it, the work would become that much messier. Finding a pitto cave from scratch required patience and diligence, which was an important factor in all things.

“If this place is in the way of our work, we can cut it open and maintain it. But if you're leaving it, that's what you're intending to do.”

For the moment, they ignored the hunt, and knowing that they would alert the pitto, they began their investigation, and surprisingly, it only took a short time to locate the burrow. It was easy to find, as there were traces here and there, probably due to the fact that they had lived here for a long time and had no dangerous external enemies. In addition, they were able to determine the approximate location of the nest by fitting the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, taking into account the location of the nest on the plains.

Seina gave them some advice that did not interfere with their experience, but since Gushuka was a good nest reader by nature, she seemed to get the hang of it in the woods right away. Chito, who had been less than enthusiastic, seemed to enjoy searching in the woods, which were more rugged than the flatlands, more than he had expected, and he was gaining more and more experience, thanks in part to his good memory. His growth was quite remarkable.

“I think we've covered most of the forest part of the plot,” he said.

“I'm sure we missed some pathways, but I think we have a pretty good idea of where the nests are. I didn't expect it to be so easy.”

“But I don't think we'll be able to hunt all the burrows again.”

“We wouldn't have been able to do this without Seina, so don't be so extravagant. Besides, if I hadn't done this research, I wouldn't have known how long it would take.”

“I know. I'm sure Pittos will be on the lookout for us, since we did a pretty thorough search anyway.”

Chito was right, the pittos were frozen motionless in their nests. But when Seina visualized them, he saw that many of them were moving a little further away.

“If it's the nest we checked at the beginning, it's probably safe now, so let's go around from there.”

“Right.”

“And it feels good to have the map filled in. I bet the people who update the map will be surprised when they see it.”

Seina showed the wooden map to Chito and Gushuka as he said this. By doing so, they recognized the sense of accomplishment of their work.

“Yes, I'm sure they will. I bet it is.”

“.....Yeah, I'm sure you're right.”

Chito replied a bit curtly, but still felt pulled by Seina and Gushuka's smiles, and his voice was becoming more upbeat.

“Seina. I'm curious about that larger den that was by that cliff.” Gushuka was referring to the den, which was large for a pitto thing and also looked a bit new.

“But maybe this trap and the size of the entrance don't match up a bit?”

The den was nearly twice the size of the trap. There was a good chance they would be alerted and pass through that circle.

“We also have larger traps in the warehouse, Chito, you know that, don't you?”

“Okay! I'll leave it to you!”

Chito ran straight to the relay base warehouse. Gushuka looked relieved and patted her chest as she saw him off.

“.....Good. It seems to be all right.”

“What?”

“He's been avoiding everyone, so he doesn't go near places where people gather by himself.” Gushuka turned to Seina and mischievously stuck out her tongue at him.

[She is quite the scheming sister. I'm sure she knew what you were up to when you showed her the map and complimented her on it.]

<.....I hope Chito will never find out about this for the rest of his life.>

Still, it was nice to know that Chito had friends like this, so Seina responded with a light smile.

× × ×

They had already read the nest and decided on the placement, so they started setting up the trap as soon as Chito returned. Although visibility was a little poor in the woods and the three of them were positioned at different heights, they confirmed with a light whistle that each was in position, and then counted to three from the starting signal and sounded our bubudas in unison.

“Eh!”

The ground rumbling of the pittos running away was so loud that all of them unintentionally shouted. Anyway, the trap bags they had set up swelled up a bit surprisingly, and the traps seemed to be on the verge of coming undone. Especially the biggest trap bag, which Seina was in charge of, was in a terrible state.

“Ha ha! Ha ha!”

Even Seina couldn't help but laugh out loud at the sight of the huge catch. He quickly approached and removed the trap and tied its mouth ..... and then,

“Woah woah woah!”

Chito's screams filled the forest.

Seina quickly dropped the trap and headed toward the voice, only to find that the trap bag Chito was holding was clearly moving abnormally. Something much larger than a pitto was rampaging recklessly, and Chito was being swung around by it. Moreover, a sharp, nearly ten-centimeter-long horn-like object was sticking out of the sturdy bag.

“Chito, let it go!”

“No! If I let go, it'll get away!”

“I said let it go!”

“But, but .....”

Chito would not let go of Gushuka's hand despite her screams and yells. It was more like his hand had stiffened than a desire to let go.

“Kuh!”

Seina quickly pulled out a working knife from his magic bag and <Spiritual Thread Guidance!>

The moment he connected the knife and the point to the rampaging thing, he threw the knife.

“Peeeeeggggghhh!”

Without a pause, the knife plunged deeply through the bag into the rampaging thing.

“Chito!”

Seina and Gushuka yelled at the same time and rushed to Chito. The bag was already still, and blood was slowly seeping from the puncture wound.

“You idiot! Why didn't you let go of it right away!”

Apart from the harshness of her tone, Gushuka's hand was gentle as she looked after Chito.

“.....Sorry, sorry.”

Relieved, Chito apologized honestly with teary eyes, turning to face Seina and giving a small bow, albeit awkwardly.

“You seem uninjured?”

“Yes, thanks to Seina-san's quick finish, it doesn't look like it was caught in the corner, and it doesn't seem to be hurting anywhere.”

“Well, that's good ....., but what is it?”

“I think it's probably a queen, based on the length of the upper species ..... horns in the pitto. Anyway, let's hurry back to the relay base.”

× × ×

“Yeah, that was definitely a queen pitto. I can't do much about the forest area, so maybe it grew up and turned into a demon.” When they brought it back to headquarters and reported it, the guild official who seemed to be in charge said with a wry smile as he returned Seina's knife, which he had cleaned up.

“A blow to the vital spot, nice skill. As expected of Barigaru-san's apprentice. Your capture results are also quite good, and there is still some time before the end time, but unfortunately, I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to end today's hunt.”

“Indeed, it's dangerous for the kids.”

The queen pitto he showed them was more than twice the length of a normal pitto but not much different in shape. But it also had sharp horns that had broken through that trap sack, and its teeth and claws were quite well developed. The problem was that the queen was not necessarily a single animal, and there could be larger, more ferocious individuals. Nevertheless, there was still some time before the end of the day, and Chito and the others look disappointed.

“Well, don't be so depressed. The map of the forest that you and your team have updated will be used as a reference for the assessment of the danger, which will probably take place after tomorrow. Usually, it's just an extra pathway to a den, so it's only pocket change, but with something like this we can expect to add quite a bit. The kids just can't be bothered with the woods and stuff like that. They've done a lot of research.”

Gushuka and Chito looked at each other and smiled, delighted that their work has been recognized. Their amicable relationship was a very funny sight, and it gave Seina a sense of warmth.

“By the way, I'd like to collect our equipment, can I go into the woods?”

“Hmm? Yeah, if it's just you, it shouldn't be a problem.”

× × ×

Seina hurried back into the woods, took the bubudas and tools out of the woods and left them to Gushuka and the others, and began his search.

<Let's dig one up just to try it out.>

The soil in the forest was humus, and not well trodden, probably because not many people had entered the area.

“Range specified, armored.”

Seina put the magic element on the surface of his hand like a shield, and he just plunged it in. It went in as if he was sticking my hand into a rice husk. As he dug out the soil and separated it more, he looked at the object and saw that it was a mass of less than five centimeters, like a small potato, like a white truffle.

[Oh, this! It is a kind of “proshetto” tuber. It is a plant that accumulates magic element and uses its energy to grow underground roots in all directions. The amount of magic element accumulated in the plant probably indicates that it is in a pre-sprouting state, and to our surprise, it is one of the main ingredients of the Extra Potion. Please pick it! Or rather, pick and pick!]

Extra potion was a magic elixir that could heal even limb loss. If it was the main raw material, it could be expected to fetch a high price. It was the same as finding a treasure trove.

<Oh, an unexpected treasure here! Then, let's pick up something good.>

[To prevent eradication, let's only collect items with high magical element density.]

<That's right. Since we don't have time to dig everywhere, let's specify a range and store them in the spiritual thread storage.>

Relieved that Nayuta did not say “uproot,” Seina looked at the underground reaction and surrounded the entire area of soil about one centimeter in circumference at the point of magical elements. He put them directly into the spiritual thread storage.

<The combination of range specification and spirit thread storage is really easy to use.>

[As long as it is not resisted by magic element, it is good that even iron can be cut. Although it is only with Seina-san's magical element amount, you can do a variety of detailed processing.]

<However, the amount of magic element consumed by the range specification is very large for wrought metals. Precision metalworking is a long way off, isn't it?>

Processed products, especially metals forged by human hands, actually had a certain amount of magic naturally applied to them that resisted range specification. However, if the amount of magic element was raised considerably, cutting was still possible, but if a person was holding the weapon or armor, the magic of physical reinforcement was automatically applied to the weapon or armor, or it was firmly resisted. The blacksmith workshop in the basement of Barigaru's house became the sample for these areas. Anyway, there was a large amount of scrap iron collected for recycling, so he borrowed some, tested it, and put it in a container to be thrown directly into the furnace to destroy the evidence.

[Because range-specified cutting can be processed freely and has a really wide range of applications. It's fun because you can even create things like 3D models with the magic element.] Nayuta spent her evenings designing love nests with that magic.

<Don't mess with that underground quarry, okay?>

[I know. I want something good anyway, so I'll search patiently.]

She was already shopping at the museum for potential stone materials. Since that was a former royal palace, the building materials used were all top quality.

<Well, you can try “mystery building materials” then.>

Another mystery series created by the first creator of “Mystery Gold”. Its name suggested that it was suitable to use as a building material, but its true nature was still a mystery.

The proshetto’s in the soil were placed one after another in the spirit string storage by specifying the range. After collecting about 30 good-looking items, he removed them from the spiritual thread storage, put them in a collecting bag, and transferred them to the magic bag while dusting off the soil. It was a two-step process, but it was necessary in order to present the harvest in public.

“Here you go.”

Brushing off the dirt, Seina exited the woods and walked over to where the two kids were cleaning up.

“No, we're just getting ready as well. We're still hunting around here, so we're still good to go, right?”

“No, we've had enough. Let's just get this over with and let's take a breather. You must be tired from all this.”

“I'm used to it, but .....”

“I'm still fine too!” Chito's mouth curled into a smile, as if he was frustrated at being worried. His appearance was childish, but it was better not to say so.

“I see. You're quite dependable, aren't you? But I rest when I can. It's important to be prepared for the unexpected.”

“Uh-huh.”

Chito's mood, which had been somewhat resigned and wary of Seina, was changing. However, the unapproachable and unbelieving part of him was still there.

× × ×

Seina and his team were returning the traps and bubudas to the headquarters base after some light maintenance. Of course, you could return them as they were, but if you did the maintenance, they gave you a fruit similar to a mango in exchange.

<This place is really well thought out.>

The fruit was a little acidic, but also sweet. After taking a rest while eating the fruits, they hurried back to the guild.

In the morning, they had to move all together, but in the evening, they were free to return at their own convenience, and above all, they heard that there was a large public bath in the guild annex that could be used by guild members and staff. In fact, there were several public bathhouses in the city, but Seina had never been able to go to one because Barigaru's house had an indoor bath and because it would be bad for him to be seen with his body debilitated with a magic cold.

(Barigaru's baths are also quite splendid, but I have become accustomed to large baths.)

Starting from Amane's house to Kamidake's several kilometers long bath, in a way, it might be the only luxury Seina had learned to enjoy.

“Gahahaha! You're back.”

Upon entering the auditorium in the morning, Barigaru, who was with the reception staff, happily approached Seina when he saw him.

“Don't tell me you're here to pick me up?”

“It's my pretty apprentice's first job ..... is a joke, but I'm a guild member too. It's one of my duties as a member to take care of the pitto boys when we're short on staff, and I'd like to check on them just in case.”

“There are pitto boys ..... and girls, too.”

“When you're a little kid, you're a lot like them. More than that, I heard there was a queen, but that's fine, just like a little boy. Anyway, go check in and take a bath. I supervised the baths here, so they're pretty good.”

“You do that too? ..... Well, actually, that's what I'm looking forward to, that's why I came back early.”

“Gahahahaha! Well, enjoy it then.”

After the reception, they gave you two wooden tags. One for the bath and one for the meal in exchange for a voucher.

“Oh, and I picked up some medicinal herbs besides the pitto.”

“Hmm? You want to make it the profit of the party? But the stuff you can gather around there is not worth much money. And what can be picked during a hunt? .....”

Barigaru, who had been laughing, froze when he saw the proshetto Seina pulled out of his magic bag. But he immediately reacted, grabbing Seina's arm and dragging him to turn his back to the other staff members, glaring at them.

“I picked up about 30 of these. ..... What's wrong?”

“How many of those?”

“..... Thirty pieces. They were in the forest part of today's plot.”

Barigaru's expression fell, and he let out a deep breath, as if he had heard Seina's explanation and understood it.

“Oh ..... I see, so the queen was there to eat this guy. I'm convinced ..... but you sure attract a lot of trouble .....”

“What's wrong?”

“The queens and king pittos try to develop their magical organs by eating this guy. That's why they show up where the proshetto grows, but that's not so important. More importantly, the discovery of this guy is going to cause a lot of problems.”

“What am I supposed to do? If you want me to put them back, that's fine with me.”

“Oh, don't worry, it's not like it's going to cause any problems for the boys, just that there will be a lot of other games to be played. But for the sake of prior arrangements, we don't want them to know for a little while, so don't tell those two. And you don’t say anything, of course.” Barigaru gently held his mouth and made a gesture of silence.

“Understood.”

× × ×

After leaving the proshetto in Barigaru's hands, Gushuka led them through the basement.

(.....It's a real dungeon when you look at it this way)

It felt like a real dungeon when you saw it like this. Gushuka explained that as long as you knew where you were going, you would never get lost.

“..... Something like I've seen somewhere.”

The place they arrived at was similar in design to the Grand Palace “Tenyuen,” the exclusive accommodation for the Renza royal family in Recepshi. The building materials, however, were quite ordinary, a degraded version of the entrance.

“Well, this one is still more relaxing.”

Instead of the kinky decorations, the hotel was quite chic and modern, with a combination of different colored stones and wood. On the contrary, this one looked more prestigious. Perhaps it was just Japanese sensibility, but it was pointless to worry about it, as it was the same at Jurai and Kamidake.

[But it is a mismatch that the people here are wearing work clothes and leather armor. Like people who build houses that look like chalk palaces in the countryside ......]

<Hahaha. If I say that, I'm done. That's a kind of middle-aged man thinking, and an incurable one at that. And it's better than the baths at Tenyuen's treasure house. At least I'm not ashamed to go in there!>

[The design looks exactly like it, but the decor is chic; I'm curious if Barigaru did that or if others stopped him.]

<I'm not going to give Barigaru any extra poking around. I'm afraid of his quirks.>

“Big brother, this way!”

Before he knew it, Gushuka was calling him 'big brother,' but he felt somewhat embarrassed because he couldn't have this kind of touch with his sister Yoshiko first. With a wry smile, he proceeded to the back guardroom where Gushuka and the others were.

“..... What?” Seina stopped and stupidly exclaimed.

The changing room was just beyond, but to his surprise, it was not divided into men's and women's changing rooms. There was an upholstered stand in the center of the room, but it was high enough for an adult's face to be seen. Moreover, no one showed any sign of embarrassment, and both men and women were talking peacefully with their faces above the stand.

“Hey, big brother, over here!”

Gushuka was calling Seina on the men's side, as if it were only natural. Of course, Chito was with them.

[I guess this is the rule here. Well, I guess it's just a matter of generosity ♡]

<I hope it's not a full co-ed bath inside.> Seina gave up and headed toward Gushuka and the others.

“Is this your first time at a place like this, big brother?”

“Well, the place I’m living has baths.”

“So you don't know about these either?” Gushuka pointed to a locker for luggage and clothes.

“This one has a magical crystal key. The one that isn't glowing is the empty locker, you 'record' it with your palm like this, and when it glows red, it opens. When you put your things inside and 'lock' it, it will lock.”

“See, biometrics.”

<I guess this is Barigaru's study abroad experience here too. Well, isn't it nice not to have to worry about valuables?>

He could put the magic bag in the spirit thread storage if they were not in public view, but that was not possible here. The magic bag was being used to hide the spirit string storage in the first place but using the spirit string storage to prevent it from being stolen was a complete waste of time.

“Chito, you have to wash your head properly. It's a bath for us, so we have to clean it up.”

“..... I washed it in the well this morning.”

Gushuka was in the upper grades of elementary school in Japan, so she was just barely old enough to still take a bath with her father. Either way, they didn't seem to think anything of it when they saw naked adults around them.

“You just got it a little wet, didn't you? Big brother, help me wash Chito.”

“Hmm? Yeah, I'll take care of it.” Seina quickly changed his mind and started taking off his clothes.

“.....Wow!” A sigh escaped from Gushuka's mouth as she looked at Seina's naked body.

“Wow,..... brother, you are soooo scratched up. Did you get caught in a stampede?”

To begin with, the people Barigaru mentioned who assisted the pitto boys in the hunts were either young apprentice hunter-adventurers or retired old men with injuries; at Seina's age, he was just starting out, so it was more likely that the wounds all over his body were more accidental than battle related, so Chito's judgment that he had been wounded in the monster's outburst was reasonable.

“..... not right.”

Gushuka's sigh was more like a sigh than a murmur, so faint that Chito did not notice it. (Just like the ..... special class of people her father knew.)

Gushuka's father was an active hunter-adventurer. He was a highly ranked hunter-adventurer, but he also knew a top-class hunter-adventurer, a special class above that, who often came to visit him at home. Gushuka often got to see these hunters and adventurers as they changed clothes. Seina's body, though still a bit slender and not quite back to full strength, had a very similar feel to theirs.

(As I thought during the work, he has been involved in real battles.)

All their movements were slow and consistent. Seina's body was just like that. Gushuka was not mistaken, and the veterans around him were also astonished by Seina's body. “Okay, let's go.”

“Yes, yes!”

“You're blushing, sis! What are you doing?”

“Shut up, I don't make noise in the bathtub.”

Gushuka lightly patted Chito on the head, and then, in something of a good mood, pulled him along with her, followed by Seina.

“Oh!”

They walked through a curtain that reached almost to the floor and passed through a narrow corridor about 10 meters long, and at the end of which was the bathhouse. The bathhouse was quite spacious, and above all, there was a spectacular panoramic view in front of them.

Beyond the forest and fields, there was the buffer zone for pitto hunting, a large river crossed it, and beyond that, the forest of magical trees, but since the bathhouse was higher than the trees from their vantage point, they could see quite far. Unlike the soberly hued flora here, the forest of magic trees was colorful and looked like a beautiful painting.

“Isn't it amazing? That end of the road used to be an outcropping quarry, and it has a really high cliff. And that windowpane is something special, brought in from the sky.”

“I see. I've never seen a windowpane that big before.”

The glass, which was almost as large as the entire wall of the bathroom, was so transparent that at first glance it looked as if nothing was there, and there was no fogging caused by the steam. If it was from outer space, it was also one of the strongest on the planet. And because it supported the ceiling as a wall structure, there was no need to build any pillars in the bathhouse. No wonder Barigaru was so proud of the size and the spectacular view.

“That glass is said to be the only one of its kind on this continent. I was really surprised when Chito and I saw it for the first time.”

They both looked delighted by Seina's reaction. The giant window tended to catch the eye, but the baths were also made of stone here. The stone here varied slightly, but it was a white stone with a slight reddish tint. The unexcavated interior was accented with polished stone, and the same stone was used in different textures and combinations of stones brought from completely different places. These areas were the same as the buildings in the city.

<The baths are the same as those in Japan, with the washing area outside.>

There was a long, narrow, footbath-like bathtub for drawing hot water, and you washed your body at both ends of the tank. There were wooden boxes of hard, creamy soap placed here and there for washing, and he was surprised at the quality of the soap. It had a nice smell that was faintly different from regular soap, perhaps perfumed.

“Oh ..... oh, oh ..... oh .....”

As promised to Gushuka in the changing room, he caught Chito, who was being a pain in the ass, and washed him in every nook and cranny. Chito had not bathed very often, and the grime was falling off his body in a nasty mess, so Gushuka and Seina were both half mean and half amused.

After releasing a groggy Chito into the shallow part of the tub, Seina and Gushuka washed each other's backs.

“Is there anything itchy?”

Seina asked as he washed Gushuka's hair. Her still thin and slender body belonged to a child, but she was showing signs that she was about to become an adult.

(If I were normal, would I have taken a bath with Yoshiko like this?)

He was a little nervous about being with a girl, but Gushuka, the female hunter-adventurers, and the atmosphere around them made him forget that. But then he suddenly thought of his sister Yoshiko and got sentimental.

For Seina, who had a probability bias, the bathroom was a dangerous place, and he had never been in one with Yoshiko. He had been inexperienced in dealing with his bias, and there was a great risk that Yoshiko might be involved, even if it were only himself.

[Seina, ... I think it's safe to say that you are not washing her as a brother would.]

<What? What are you talking about?>

[It's the way you wash her hair.]

The way he carefully washed every inch of her hair, rubbing the scalp with the flat of his fingers and changing the way he washed each part of her hair and the direction of the hair, was very professional, and in fact, Gushuka felt very good and was oohing and ahhing.

<This is directly from Kiriko and Tsukiko. ..... I thought this was normal.>

[Did you forget that those people were trained as Seto-sama's ladies-in-waiting?]

<..... Oh!>

Nayuta's words were everything; Seto's ladies were perfect in every way. They knew everything, and they were the caretakers of the top class of noble people. And when it came from someone with that level of experience, even Seina's lack of experience was on par with the pros, at least when it came to washing, he used the best techniques.

<But Gushuka is a girl; we can't treat her like Chito.>

[Hmmm. Ho~~h..... she’s more like a customer.]

<What?>

He suddenly felt a strong gaze and looked to the side, where he saw a group of female hunter-adventurers peering at him with bell-shaped faces from the privacy partition, looking at him with interest.

“You're pretty good at that, aren't you? Can we make a wish too?”

Gushuka was making very pleasant noises while Seina was washing her hair, they later told him.

“No, you shouldn't have woken up such a little girl,” she said.

“You're such a bad person!”

The women teased Seina as they approached, hardly covering their fronts.

“.....”

Seina tried his best to restrain himself from waking up, but in the end, he could not escape and had to open his own hair salon.

Incidentally, the male members of the party of female adventurers, while watching the scene, were saying things like, “Thanks to him, we are happy to take a relaxing bath today”.

Seina and the kids had an unexpectedly long bath, but thanks to their early return, they were able to get to the cafeteria before the pitto boys came back and crowded the place.

“The guild has several cafeterias, and this one is the largest and can seat nearly 1,000 people. There is only one menu that changes daily, but it is known for being cheap and hearty, and most of the pitto hunting kids come here.”

He went to the serving counter, and they branded his meal ticket on the thin wooden board he had been given.

“Come on, eat with gusto! Don't be shy!” Her voice was loud and bell-like, as if she spoke loudly on a regular basis.

A big, muscular woman who would make you say, “I thought you were an ogre,” and who would shatter the image of elves as beautiful and delicate - by the way, she had a very pretty face - poured a borscht like stew into an iron pot the size of a rice bowl, to overflowing. The pot had handles so that even a child could carry it without spilling, but it was clearly not enough for a child to eat. And the bread was a loaf or so in size.

“If you want a refill, don't be shy. Oh, and you can have this one. You go this way.”

Apparently, the bucket was for the kids, and Seina was given an iron pot the size of a family pot, which made him want to ask if it was for his group. He was also given a loaf of bread twice the size of the one Chito and the others had been given earlier.

“You can't be that skinny! You have to eat your fill and get bigger.”

Seina, who had just woken up from a magical cold, had plenty of time to spare, but it was a little hard on him when his eating habits were returning to normal. However, his power to make no apologies, and above all, his innocent, carefree smile, made him swallow any objection or complaint without being able to say anything.

He understood that the reason why she encouraged people to eat so much was probably because of her body, but it would be sexual harassment to ask her about it. Anyway, he could only resign himself to the fact that this was probably her belief.

He was later told that the elf lady was a professional helper for pitto boys, and that it was common practice for regular staff and adults to avoid that time of the day. If you were unlucky enough to encounter her without knowing it, you would end up like Seina. However, there was an unspoken rule that children who saw someone who was appalled by such a situation would help them eat, so everyone got enough to eat.

(There's a limit to how much you can eat. ..... Well, if you can't finish it, it's off to the spirit thread storage.)

It actually looked so good that he was going to store half of it while it was still warm. If he didn't have enough, he could take it out and eat it later.

As soon as Seina and the others sat down, children came rushing in from the entrance like a big migration of pittos. They were mostly boys, still dirty and looking like they wanted something in their bellies faster than they could work up a sweat.

“This is what I'm looking forward to the most.”

Both Gushuka and Chito were undaunted by the amount of food they had been given, and they seemed very happy about it.

“You can only eat organs here, right.”

The internal organs of any animal required a lot of processing. It was a foodstuff only available here, where the meat processing plant was located. After a quick prayer, they began to eat.

Religion existed here, and many gods were believed to exist. Barigaru said, “There are thousands of gods in this world, so if you just say the name of one, no one will know it.” Seina followed his advice and invoked the name of the founder of the Imperial Tree, Tsunami.

“I see, it's delicious.”

The food at Barigaru's house was excellent, but the stew here was also quite tasty.

“But it's a little over-seasoned.”

In a way, it was a little more seasoned than the food he used to eat when he had the magic cold, which was a sick man's diet, but right after a hard day's labor it was very good.

The organs were quite different from the regular meat portion in taste and texture, but it had a unique and complex flavor that was more enjoyable than the rather bland pitto meat. However, since it was from a small animal, it lacked a bit in terms of chewiness. This was compensated for by the large number of vegetables cut into large pieces. And the cereal bread also had a surprisingly sweet taste, which may be for children.

<Organs are good, but again, there is not much variety of vegetables in this world.>

The basic principle here was local production for local consumption. A world that imported large quantities of food from outside was unnatural. Food self-sufficiency was the most important issue for national defense, and it should be maintained at more than 100 percent.

<Because of the sea of magical trees, we have a great variety of spices and fruits, which is the nature of the land. Well, I was surprised when there was fruit instead of vegetables in the stew. ..... Oh, it's in this one too.>

There were a wide variety of sweet, dried, and unripe fruits in the stew. He just didn't notice it, but young unripe fruit was also in there as a vegetable substitute.

<I've gotten used to it. I'm the kind of person who can handle pineapple in my sweet-and-sour pork.>

[Still, don't you miss Kiriko's cooking sometimes?]

Kiriko's cooking equaled Japanese food.

<It's no use begging for something you don't have. But the spices give it a curry flavor, which is my best friend. I'd like to try some of my preserved freshwater fish at some point, but I'd probably grill it first. If it's too earthy, I'll have to remove the mud, but that's impossible in the spirit thread storage.>

[I also need a subspace storage with time acceleration. The best thing is a base where we can do many things, but if we are going to stay at Barigaru's for a while, we can rent a garden area and do some mud removal and drying in the sun. You can cooperate with Nana there, right?]

<I see. I'll think about that, but there are places in this market that I haven't been to yet, so I'll take my time and go around next time. There are many meat shops, but there might be some fresh fish too. I'm looking forward to discovering things little by little.>

[Yes, that's right. If you go to other places, you may find a lot of things. ..... By the way, did you notice anything in the serving area?]

<Oh, three kinds of stew. They were changing it up depending on who they were serving, so I guess it's the same as Nana's?>

Nana was a Kobold, so he couldn't eat very strong seasonings. So even when he cooked, he almost always lightly seasoned the ingredients. Fruits and vegetables were often eaten raw.

<Nana is a demon, but it is reasonable to assume that beast men have similar tastes and characteristics.>

[Yes. The other one seems to be the one without the organ meat. There was something that looked like meat, so it may be a religious precept.]

<Religion or ..... the only thing I was warned about in advance was the prayer at mealtime, so I don't think it's too much of a problem, but I'll ask Barigaru later.>

[That's better. But still, the more I look at it, the more amazing the amount of food is.]

<I think I would believe it if you told me this was the venue for a big eating contest. It's okay if the taste is to your liking, but if it's something that doesn't suit your palate, it's torture.>

Glancing to the side, Gushuka and Chito were already finishing up their meals. Chito finished his meal with about two bites left, looked from the empty pot to the serving table, and quickly got up to leave.

“Wait a minute.” Gushuka stopped Chito as he was about to stand up for a refill.

“Chito, wait here.”

With that, Gushuka went to the serving line alone. Chito was a little disgruntled and miffed, but when she came back and he saw her bowl overflowing with stew, he was satisfied.

“..... Don't tell me, Gushuka did that all by herself?”

“She doesn't have any sense of moderation. If you ask for a refill, she will fill it up without question, so one of us has to go and split it. Be careful, brother.”

“I don't think I'm going to go for a refill, but I wish you would have told me before we came here.”

That way they could have staggered the time or something.

“I forgot, teehee.”

“Kuh!”

You couldn't complain with a real girls 'teehee'.

Once upon a time, Kai did it to Kiriko and got beat up, and Dai, imitating Kai, was not sure what Tsukiko did to him, but he had not been seen for about half a year. That was a forbidden self-destructive technique that a man should never do.

Anyway, Gushuka shared her bowl full of stew with Chito and ate it up with satisfaction.

Chapter Ten: The Aftermath of Half a Man

After the semi-painful meal, Seina and the kids returned to the auditorium. There, privacy partitions and desks had been set up, and it looked like a simple job fair.

The reception area seemed to be determined by the morning's classifications, and without hesitation, Gushuka headed for the numbered box assigned to them, followed by Seina and Chito.

“Oh! You're back. You've been up to no good.”

Seina and the kids sat on the couch with the three of them across the desk from each other, as if they were having an interview.

“The women who got their hair washed demanded that you be made a permanent staff member. What a surprise, the men are jointly named, too.”

“We don't wash hair for the men, do we?”

“Because it makes it easier for us!”

Barigaru's words had real substance. Incidentally, the men at that point were playing some stuff with Chito, who was letting loose.

“..... Is that Mr. Arche?”

“Why did you say that name!?”

“I heard he was in a bad mood or something when he was talking about goblins.”

“Oh, he was. ..... Especially when it comes to beauty-related matters, women are terrifying. Even more so since rumors spread that the little boy's hair-washing skills were the same or better than the ones he received at the nobleman's place.”

Gushuka, who probably knew how the women felt, happily nodded her head in affirmation several times as she listened to Barigaru's words.

“Nobles?”

“High ranking hunter-adventurers often receive requests from the nobility. When that happens, they are often entertained at the mansion or invited to parties. Sometimes I would be invited to their homes to get freshened up. Of course, I've said no, but be careful, because they might find out you're helping the pitto boys and barge in at that time of day.”

“Even if you tell me to be careful, it's the same place for men and women here .....”

There was nowhere to run, and he'd hate even more to give up that bath.

“Then you're going to have to limit the number of people. And while we're on the subject, you're good with that one, right?”

Barigaru lowered his voice and glanced at Gushuka and Chito.

“Huh? .....Yes, if it's okay with you.”

“Okay. Then let's get started.”

Barigaru's voice was a little subdued as he opened what looked like a ledger with a tally written on it. As expected, his usual volume of voice would be heard everywhere.

“You party came in third today. The total number was 235, and the weight was 705 kilograms.”

Gushuka quickly interrupted Chito, who was about to shout at the number. It was as if she had anticipated his reaction. In her case, she had experience and had probably anticipated a certain quantity from the time of the hunt.

“The unit price is fixed at 600, so the total is 435,000 Yen. I've doubled the weight because the animals in the forest were large, and the queen pitto’s meat is a high-end product.”

“Okay, so ..... per person.”

“Well, wait. That's just the price of the pitto. The queen pitto has a magical organ, which is more developed than we thought, and it's priced at 100,000. If it had been intact, I could have added a little more for the blood, but that's not an option in that situation.”

Gushuka was all smiles at the unexpected bonus.

“Well, lastly, the little boy ..... Seina, not Chito. The proshetto the little boy picked.”

“Pfft!”

Gushuka almost shouted this time. But she quickly covered her mouth. She knew what it meant.

“After the appraisal, all thirty pieces were found to be of the finest quality. There are collectors who specialize in this stuff, and they are usually contracted by the Guild of Magical Apothecaries, and it is common for hunter-adventurers to bring in a few pieces a year, if they happen to find them at all. They are of average quality, and the finest have probably never been brought in since the beginning of the guild's history.”

“So you're going to send it to the guild of witchcraft and pharmacy?”

“Don't be silly! This is a great opportunity. I'm not going to let them take it away!” Barigaru clenched his fists with a big smile.

[.....It sounds like some kind of trouble.]

“Hmph. I mean, the fact that we have the right to buy and sell the Extra Potion made from this guy is important. The Guild of Magical Apothecaries potions sells only to the royal nobility, and hunter-adventurers are not allowed to sell to the guild. Of course, we can't monopolize all of the potions from there, but we don't have an adversarial relationship with them, so we can't help it.

However, the trade of the Extra Potions made will be auctioned off to a select group of guild members so that the nobility will not be involved."

"So that's what you mean ....., it's become somewhat important."

"What are you talking about? In return for finding the proshetto, you kids will receive a portion of the proceeds from the auction. Well, good luck getting a good price for it. If you want to watch the auction, you can, but you don't have the right to participate."

[This is going to be a real mess.]

<Yes, it is. But maybe we can make some progress on this.>

"So, the buy-in price for the proshetto is 2.4 kilos in all. This one has a unit price in grams, 3,000 ..... highest quality, so it got the highest price. This one is taxed, so the total is 5.76 million Yen."

He couldn't decide if that was high or low, but it was certainly about ten times the total of today's pitto.

"....."

Both Gushuka and Chito were silent now, they were getting shakier and shakier.

"..... Don't want it. I don't want it. It was my brother who took that." He assured him, his voice trembling.

"Gahahaha. That's the son of Gazbaar. You are wise. It's better to push the troublesome matter to this little boy and forget about it. Now ....."

Once the income and expenditure reports were finished, the next step was to decide how the money would be handed over.

The basic plan was to deposit the money in the guild, but if the family was struggling financially, they took home what they needed for the day. However, in some places it was not safe for children to take money home, so they were sent home as a group while there was still daylight. Many parents worked at this market, and some came to pick up their children. If it was still deemed dangerous, the guild may provide an escort.

"What about Gushuka and the others? I can give them a ride if you want."

"I have a friend I always go home with, and Chito lives in an apartment owned by the guild, so it's close by."

"Okay. Okay, so, as far as the distribution of the money, you have no problem with what we talked about this morning, right?

"....., that's still more than four times the usual amount."

Seina got eight and Gushuka and Chito get one each, but unlike in the morning, Chito didn't seem to have any objections.

“But sis, you can go to .....”

“I'm good. The house won't be in trouble anytime soon, and most of all, hunting with my brother is a great learning experience. It's not every day I get a chance to learn something like this.”

“Yeah, I agree. Third place is ..... a long way off for me.”

It was a pessimistic statement about the loss of this situation when a month passed, or even sooner.

“Welcome back. How was your first day of pitto hunting?”

Back at Barigaru's house, Nana greeted Seina with a smile. It was a smile that made him glad to be tired from work. It was the kind of adorable gesture that would make Kai, Kenneth, or Rajau jump at him, saying, “I don't care if it's a male!”

“It was fun. I was third in the number of hunts.”

“I'm glad to hear that. What would you like to eat?”

“There's a great server at the guild market.”

“Oh, she's famous. Then I don't think you'll be able to eat.”

“Please only feed me in the mornings for a while, because Barigaru-san is going to be late.

“I understand. Have you already taken a bath?”

“Yes, I enjoyed Barigaru-san's pride and joy.”

“I see. I left the magic crystals that need to be filled in the usual place.”

“Oh, okay. Thank you.”

Leaving Nana, Seina went upstairs to his usual place.

There was a small wooden box on the work desk, containing the magic crystals to be filled.

<Twenty today, huh? I don't think this one is for lighting over there.>

[I'm glad it's not for military use. Now we don't have to worry about the magical element pattern leaking out.]

<Barigaru seemed to be aware of it, but I guess that makes me feel safer.>

Seina's expression brightened as one source of anxiety was resolved. And since the speed at which he could replenish his internal magical elements through breathing had recently become even faster, he didn't need to take breaks when filling the medium-volume magical crystal in front of him. Seina could do it even faster, but he was careful not to inadvertently turn the crystals into pure crystals. Since he already had nearly 80 million magical elements, he could easily exceed the filling limit if the speed of filling the normal crystals was not controlled.

<This reminds me of the time I just completed Bio-Enhancement.>

Barigaru left a note with the approximate required filling volume, but if the filling speed was too fast, pure crystallization would occur as well as overfilling. After all, he had been trying to keep a constant speed since he realized that it was the filling pressure that was the problem.

<Well, when I become an official hunter-adventurer, I will probably have to fill magic crystal equipment, so this is good training for then.>

[Also, thanks to this part-time job, I now know how much Barigaru trusts you.]

Thanks to this part-time job, he understood the numerical standard of magical elements, and he knew that the values measured by him and those measured by them were almost the same, and that there was no deception in the part-time fee based on the amount of filling.

<But it's sad to say that all the work we do is offset by the debt.>

[And yet, you seem to be having a lot of fun watching the numbers go down.]

It turned out that the large amount of magical element filling work unexpectedly facilitated the crystallization of the magical element organs. Of course, there was no explosive growth as was the case of polar crystallization, scanning of the magical element organs, and differentiation of the magical element, but compared to other operations, the crystallization rate was the best.

<Now, the rest is the usual task.>

Then the daily routine was to check each point connected by spirit threads, organize the items in the spirit thread storage, train in the magic they had developed so far, and search for new magic.

<How is the progress on the city warding issue? Is there going to be any monitoring or anything like that?>

[They have recently increased their vigilance and the intervals between scans along the city streets are quite random. Passcodes have been found, and scans of the entire warding area are also being done at random intervals. There is no surveillance at this time.]

<So you're saying it's hard to time the activation of the points? Are you alarmed?>

When multiple senses were given to the magic sphere, people and animals with keen intuition sometimes reacted to it, but if only one was used, it never reacted to anyone or any kind of warding. But the monstrous wards that covered the entire city could detect even one of them.

[It may have been constructed by someone who knows the technology above. However, I don't know how much of the magical element that maintains these wards and how they are replenished, but I doubt that such vigilance can be performed for any length of time.]

<We'll just have to wait and see for a while...you can receive emergency calls from ZINV, right?>

<Yes, we can receive emergency calls from ZINV. Since it does not respond to radio waves, and since the emergency call is instantaneous and the encryption code is impossible to decipher, the main question is whether anyone will be aware of the transmission.>

Radio communication was not practical in space, but that was the lesson he learned when Tarrant's marker paint bullets put a radio blockade in place.

<So it's impossible to receive hyperspace transmissions. ..... Well, it's only for a moment, and I don't think there's even the concept of radio communication here.>

Although they didn't understand how it worked, magical communication may be a kind of hyperspace communication, by spirit threads. And the sky people only used hyperspace communication. Radio was a brilliant gap technology.

<Yet we must not let our guard down. The best thing is that nothing is going to happen to ZINV. Still, the marker bullets gave me a lot of trouble, but it's a weird feeling because the strangest things are useful. ..... So, on the communications front, I was thinking, if we can get the magical element library to record the outside technology, we can all use that magic on all the magical element worlds. I'm sure that's what you're talking about.>

[Yes. Is that it?]

<If each person has their own pattern of internal magic elements, even after registering it in the library, I would like to be able to only use my magic essence pattern to activate magic...>

[..... Hmph, you're pretty devious yourself. So it is possible.]

<.....Nayuta has leveled up. I didn't expect you to make that kind of joke. ..... I didn't have time to go along with it either. Can you do it? Really?>

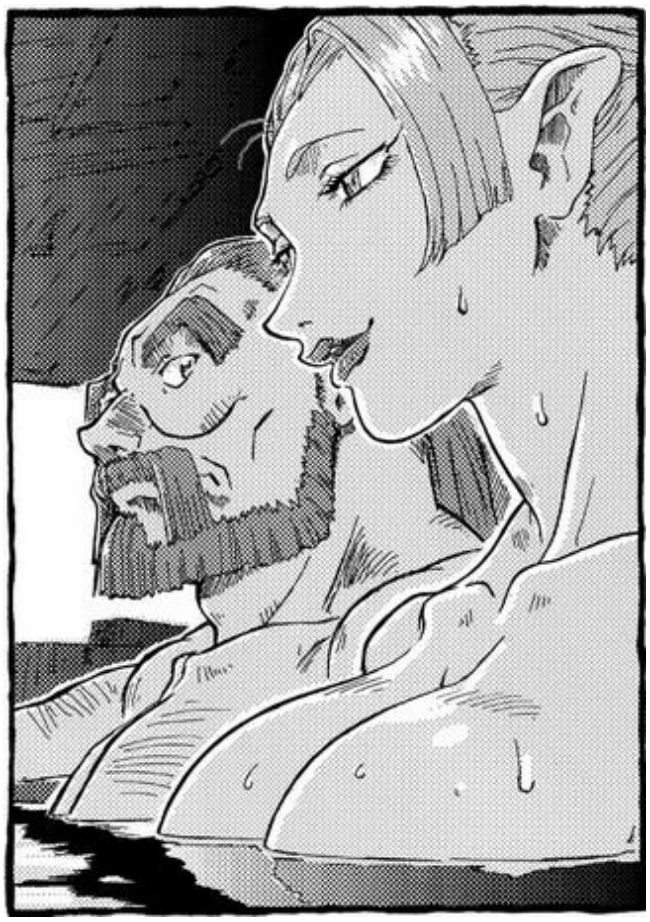
[But only for magic developed by Seina, and if others develop something similar to that magic, the protection will be lifted.]

<That's fine. It's a bit awkward that I'm the only one who can use it, but ..... otherwise it's a big mess and I might accidentally activate something bad. I don't have anything that needs to be protected at the moment, though.>

[There are a lot of things that could be bad if people know they can be used, though.]

<I'm sure there will be more disguise-type magic in the future. ......>

Seina prayed to Tsunami that he would soon become a normal hunter-adventurer.



In the middle of the night, two shadows, one male and one female, were seen in the large bathroom supervised by Barigaru. One was Barigaru and the other was Baron Herrera Margardo Nashbar, the lord of the estate. She was a beautiful woman with slightly upturned eyes and thick lips that give her a sense of softness, and her body was a little chubby, but this gave her a moist, sexy appearance.

They soaked in the bathtub, the lights completely dimmed, and gazed up at the star-filled sky.

“Hmmm. Proshetto in third place for pitto harvest. I certainly see promise here. I'm sure it's not just luck, but ability as well. ..... By the way, come on, ...”

Herrera placed her hand glamorously on Barigaru's shoulder. But Barigaru popped it with a snap of his fingers.

“You’re going to have to deal with the Magic Potions Guild.”

“The expected production quantity is five bottles. He wants to get three bottles somehow, ... all of them if he can. And the secret of how that guy found the proshetto, I guess?”

“Gahahahaha! That's a brazen story on top of pushing scraps on us.”

“That's what a great noble creature is. They really believe that the world revolves around them.

“Hmph! It's not like the old days when communication was bad. The guilds all over the continent have already been notified, so there will be a lot of special class people here. Even if you're a great noble, you'll go bankrupt if you try to buy three of them.”

Those who gathered for the auction were those who had been approved by the Hunters and Adventurers Guild. They were the ones who would not be bought off by the nobility. If they were to bribe them, they would first spend a lot of money there. And if the same information was being sent to guilds all over the continent, it meant that there were aristocrats all over the continent who had obtained this information.

If they had to win an auction on top of that, you can't imagine how much money they would have to spend. If the pride and competitiveness of the nobility were involved, it would be a quagmire. And since they want three of them, you can imagine how reckless they were asking for it.

“Of course, as long as the Guild of Magical Apothecaries has a route that specializes in proshetto, there's no merit in overreacting for a few irregular bottles. I'm sure they'll back off as soon as they find out it’s no good, ... but I'm sure both the arcane pharmacy guild and the great nobility will want the secret of how that guy was able to find thirty top-quality proshetto,..... Wouldn't they want it?”

The Extra Potion was not something that even the guilds of witchcraft and pharmacy could produce in such abundance. And not enough of them were available to the nobility and royalty. In the first place, the Extra Potion was an insurance policy for emergencies. No one was satisfied with just one bottle.

“There was a queen pitto where she wasn't supposed to be, so he dug around to see what he could find.

..... That's all there is to it. If the kid doesn't do the same thing in the future, it'll die down soon.”

“Doesn't that bother you?”

“I'm sure the kid is doing something behind my back, but that's normal for hunters and adventurers. The secret to a long life is not to dig him up.”

“You like him a lot, don't you? There's a lot going on behind the scenes, isn't there?”

“Competent and serious. There's no reason to dislike him. It's better to have them on your side than be against them. And since the guild is afraid that the monopoly will be broken, even the nobility will not be willing to look into the future of the Extra Potion trade.”

It was not only the “great nobility,” as Herrera put it, that the Guild of Potions and Medicine was doing business with. He wasn’t stupid enough to stick his hand in their territory and piss them off.

“You want to break it up, don't you?”

“What I want is the unification of both guilds, just like you. I'm not interested in winning or losing. As long as the value of the magic liquid crystal is increasing, there will come a time when we have to make up our minds somewhere.”

“Otherwise, both sides will fall together. Only the royalty and nobility will be happy, huh?”

Even within the Sea of Monsters, where most of the demons reside, there were some borders. However, most of it was impossible to guard and was practically no land at all. And the fact that they were hunting demons from there with their own troops meant that they were in a near constant state of war. Considering the maintenance costs and the wear and tear on the soldiers, it would have been far cheaper to outsource the guilds of hunters and adventurers to the private sector and buy the necessary materials from them or collect them as taxes. For this reason, the guilds of hunters and adventurers in each country were eventually integrated into a single organization, which had a great deal of influence over the country.

“In any case, if the two guilds were to become enemies, the royalty and nobility would side with the Guild of Magical Apothecaries and attack us. If the leadership of each country were to join in the conflict, it could lead to a major war. If that happens, this continent will be swallowed up by the magical tree.”

“I understand. I'll try not to get too involved in this matter. You take care of the other thing.” Having reached a decision, Herrera gently leaned against Barigaru.

The next day, Seina finished his usual deliveries, ate Nana's breakfast, and then went to the guild market to visit the restaurant where he had been to with Barigaru yesterday. He had not paid much attention when he was with Barigaru yesterday, but he was curious to see how much breakfast was served there.

“You have to eat right in the morning!”

That elf lady was full of energy, even though it was early in the morning, and she was handing out to the kids the same small pot of barley porridge as yesterday's dinner, with vegetables on top, and a large chunk of grilled meat.

[Was it that early in the morning? It's amazing that no child has gained weight after three meals like that.]

<I know I have to eat well in the morning, but ..... that amount of food is indeed tough.>

“You there! You’re the guy from yesterday, aren’t you? Don't just stand there, come down here!”

The elf lady suddenly pointed at Seina and exclaimed. After much questioning and hesitation, Seina was eventually defeated by the smiling lady and given the same meal as last night, a large pot of rice porridge with two pieces of meat.

The barley porridge was lightly flavored with a little curry. He thought that curry was popular among children in this world. The meat was pork and a bird-like meat with a sweet sauce, which

really stimulated his appetite, but it was too much to eat after breakfast, and he had to put more than two thirds of the meat in spirit thread storage.

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Seina was rubbing his heavy stomach as he made his way to the auditorium.

<Oh, what a mess. I didn't think they would remember my face .....>

[Why don't we just go there every morning and eat emergency food? You shouldn't eat without working, but since you do work, why not? She is the one who found you and called out, so I guess that's what makes your life worth living.]

<She must have a reason to live,....., because she seems to try to feed me whenever she can,..... Then, since it's a favor, I'll indulge her. I'd be very grateful if I could stock up on emergency rations.>

If he couldn't eat it and wanted to stockpile it, that was out of the question, but since he was given this much to eat, it was in the spirit of “oh, well” to stockpile it rather than throw it away.

In the auditorium, many children had already finished eating and were gathering to talk the day's plot assignments. Those with experience knew where the plots were today and had information on which of them were good hunting grounds. The morning lottery was the first try of the day.

And as usual, Chito and Gushuka were far away from the group, but the looks from the group were a bit different than yesterday.

“That was yesterday?”

“Third place, isn't it thanks to that adult?”

“But, you know, ...”

“Normally, ...”

It seemed that the previous evening's events were already being gossiped about. For hunter-adventurers, the results of their hunts were directly related to their reputation. In Chito's case, it was the parents who were the problem, so the evaluation of their achievements must be different. Of course, it all depended on how you judged the plus alpha of Seina.

“Good morning. Good to see you today.”

Seina greeted them calmly, as if he didn't care about the noise around him. The evaluation of the people around him was just noise, he was still in the stage of interest, and he still needed more achievements to make it a clear evaluation. The problem lay within, and until that was resolved, he could not rest on his laurels.

“Good morning.”

“..... Good morning.”

In contrast to Gushuka's cheerful, smiling face, Chito's expression was dark. Seina was a little relieved to see that there were no new scars on his face.

“Hey, hey ..... brother .....”

“Did they tell you to ask for a raise?”

“!?”

From the look on Chito's face, it seemed that it was a figure of speech. Or rather, he couldn't think of anything else.

“But I can't accept that. If you have a problem with it, tell Barigaru-san, you know.”

“But then, my brother is .....”

Seina patted Chito's head a little roughly and looked pleased.

Let's do our best again today. Our goal is first place.”

“That's good. I guess we should aim high.” Gushuka replied cheerfully in response to Seina and put her hand on Chito's shoulder.

“Forget about it when you're working. Otherwise, you will get hurt.”

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“Excuse me, are you the people who will be in charge of section 45 in district 33 today?”

A girl who had seen that the lots had been decided by lottery and received a map spoke to Seina in a polite manner. Her crisp demeanor and language, and her tight-fitting beautiful girlishness, made him feel that if this were a school, he would unintentionally call her 'committee chairperson' or 'student council president'.

The young girl addressed Seina politely. Her smart composure, choice of words and overall air of being strict but pretty, made you want to call her 'Chairperson' or 'Class President,' or you would, if this was a school.
RASKA
DOGARU
KUSTO
"Excuse me, but are you the guys who are in charge of district 33, block 45?"
YAMADA SEINA
CHIITO
GUSHUKA

“Oh, yes. And you?”

“We are the party in charge of lot 46 next door today. I'm Raska and over there are Kusto and Dogaru.”

“Oh, that's polite. I'm Seina, the girl is Gushuka, and Chito.”

“Kukk, you're a grown man and you don't even know that.”

“You're so old you want to become a hunter-adventurer.

The two boys who were with the girl were already in middle school, whispered to each other, as if they were making fun of Seina.

”No, brother, no. Those people are here to talk about the nests that straddle both plots.”

“I beg your pardon, my partners. I don't think you know this, but the nests that border both parcels are to be attacked jointly by both parties. So we wanted to call on you to discuss that.”

Compared to the two boys, the girl seemed much friendlier. However, the fact that she didn't pay attention to them suggested that there was a bit of a wall, or rather a personality difference, between the girl and the two boys.

<Because it's a children's party, I thought they were all acquaintances or friends to some extent, but this party seems to be a little different.>

Perhaps it was because they were older than the other children, but the impression he got was a little different.

“It's not that I'm rude. In fact, yesterday was my first time in this business.”

“And yet, yesterday you were third place. We were fourth.”

“We've never fallen out of fifth place, though.”

In the end, the boys were probably disappointed to have lost to Seina and his team, to which the girl only let out a small sigh of exasperation.

“That's right. It's important to continue to produce results in this kind of thing. We'll try to do the same.”

“Heh, you know what you're talking about, even though you're an old man.”

The boys seemed to be in a better mood, and then, perhaps losing interest in them, they began to talk together. Apparently, they left the external negotiations to the girl.

[I hear you’re an ossan?]

<For those kids, that's how it is when you're my size.>

“Anyway, let's talk as we move.”

“Roger that, Ms. Chairman.”

He tried to be strong with Nayuta but being treated like an old man stung a little, and he inadvertently reacted to Raska's words.

“Is it okay?”

“Ah!? ..... Oh, I said its fine.” The girl Raska had such an air about her.

“Is that so? Actually, my mother calls me that sometimes, too, so I thought it might mean something ..... but the way she says it, it doesn't sound like it means much.”

“Oh, really? Well, according to my grandfather, it sounds like a firm caretaker.”

I see. ..... Understood. Thank you for telling me.” Raska thanked him smilingly, but there was a clear, angry aura of anger toward her mother in her mood.

<..... That …>

[Coincidence, I guess. Anyway, on with the job]

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“As for me, I appreciate your party. Pitto hunting can be done by kids, because it's a well-organized environment. But if you want to actually produce results, it takes a certain amount of skill.”

<She really is quite a solid girl>.

[They say girls mature faster, but she's special.]

“So being in third place is not something that can be produced by chance or luck alone. Besides, yesterday your plots were in a wooded area. According to the record, no party could have achieved a third-place harvest there. And the newly added map, of course it was just for reference at this stage, but the fact that it covered the entire forest area was astounding.”

“We just stuck to the basics, that's all.”

“It's wonderful that you can do that. In fact, I have had my eye on Gushuka for some time. I have even approached her.”

“Really?”

“Yes, I invited her to a party at .....”

“A party? But what about them?

The boys were so engrossed in their private conversation that they didn't even look at him. Of course, they didn't seem to be on bad terms with each other, but it was more of a business-like relationship. “It's more in the future. It's when I'm an adult, when I'm an official hunter-adventurer.”

“I won't be working with them.”

“They and I have different goals. They want to be upper-level hunter-adventurers who aim for the abyss of the Magic Sea of Trees, and I want to hunt pittos and goblins in the neighborhood.”

“Oh, I see. That sounds great.”

“What?” His expression was puzzled, unlike her previous squeaky-clean look. In a sense, it was a childlike expression.

“.....What? What's wrong?”

“Shh, excuse me. It is rare for me to hear you say so. There are many men who say that the goal of a hunter-adventurer is to hunt high-ranking demons and aim for the unknown magical tree abyss, and so on, that .....”

No matter what, the important thing is still the foundation, the base. This kind of living base allows for adventure. The pitto is one of the things that supports a person's food base, so don't despise it."

"Yes! Yes, it is. And as you can see from yesterday's income and expenses, our earnings are not bad, even after taxes are deducted. It's close by, less dangerous, and can be done continuously every day. In fact, it is possible to make as much money as a mid-level hunter-adventurer. We women, for example, can make it our job even while we are married and raising our children."

"Yes. That's a good plan. But still, it's great that you're thinking about it now."

"I'm ....." Gushuka glanced at Chito in confusion. She was worried about what would happen to Chito if she continued to work with Raska as they were now.

"It's not right now. It's still many years away, so you can take their time and think about it." Raska said in a good mood, partly because she was happy that Seina recognized her future plans.

× × ×

"Then let's start by checking the den."

Gushuka, Seina, and Raska checked the structure of the nest from the map and then began reading the nest. After yesterday's experience, Seina was also able to read the nests without visualizing the magical elements.

"It won't make much difference anyway, so let's just get it over with. There are plenty of other nests out there."

But the two boys were not happy, as if they wanted to hurry the process.

"There's one hole blocked. There must be a new passageway."

"Well, that would be ..... over there, wouldn't it?" Seina quickly spotted one.

[Heh, you're right. The place of refuge is important to Seina, who has a probability bias. That's why you can predict its location, I guess.]

<Yes, well, I guess so .....> Seina smiled and quietly headed for a small waterway a short distance away.

"Don't you know that pittos don't like water?"

Ignoring the boys' words, Seina called Gushuka and Raska. On the bank of the canal, in a grassy area with a slight slope, there was a hole to get in and out of. It hadn't been dug that long, judging by the brand-new soil.

"There it is. But why?"

Both Gushuka and Raska seemed surprised by this. What they were talking about must be common knowledge.

“When your life is at stake, it doesn't matter what you like or dislike.”

“I see, it's true, common sense should be questioned at times.” Raska took one look at the frustrated boys and nodded in agreement.

As a result of the hunt, nearly 80% of the pittos were concentrated in the trap set at the water's edge.

× × ×

After conquering the nests that straddled both sides, the pittos were placed in cages with two party numbers. This way they would be split 50-50 when they were recorded.

“Those two guys complained the whole time. It was disgusting.”

“I guess that's the result of being obsessed with recording. When you get used to it, monotonous work tends to become tedious, and each step is neglected in order to focus on the objective and complete the number of steps. There is a difference between being efficient and being lazy. This is a relatively safe hunting ground, but there are no absolutes like yesterday.”

“True.”

By this time, Chito had become seriously aware of Seina's words, and he too was trying to develop his abilities as much as possible, carefully carving each step of the process into his body. What was surprisingly useful at that time was the pointing and checking. It was a method of double-checking with action as well as thought.

“This is good.”

Gushuka, who had originally learned to exchange commands with hand signals while hunting with her father, immediately recognized its importance.

<It's starting to come around in a good way.>

The party began to make good use of the maps and information they had accumulated up to that point, Seina's abilities, Gushuka's nest reading, and Chito's memory, and the party began to achieve more and more success.

Chapter Eleven: The Conspiracy of Fools

“I see. ..... I get the story. But it's tricky when it's Barigaru's people.”

The bar was a dimly lit half-basement, stylishly decorated with old wood, plants, and a woman playing music, and further in, up a staircase, was an office, a little more opulent than the bar, decorated in places with gilded furniture.

It looked like a hangout for scoundrels, with large men playing card games and board games and a young man who looked like a low-level employee constantly monitoring the bar through a small peeking window.

“In the first place, what is the payback for one little pitto boy to use all the people in the house? Certainly, third place would be a good deal for you.”

At the back of the office, facing a fur-covered reception set, sat a well-dressed middle-aged man with a solidly built, wrestler-like physique and a slightly bearded man still in his late 20s.

“Have you heard about the proshetto being brought to the Hunter-Adventurers Guild?”

“Yeah. I've heard that story. I heard that they're going to auction off the Extra Potion made from it ..... What does that have to do with this?”

“I talked to the kid at the house, and he said it was the pitto boy, Seina, who found it. In a short time in the woods at the pitto's hunting grounds, he found 30 ....., all of them very fine, for over 700 in trade value. And he's also entitled to the proceeds of the auction.”

“Hou .....”

The middle-aged man, who had been so careless up to that point, turned to look at the man, Chito's father.

“According to other information, Seina was carrying some strange equipment when Barigaru's party picked him up. There are rumors that he might be an air pirate.”

“That guy's source is Marquis Gingham's goblin kid, right? That kid got an apprenticeship at Barigaru's place through his parents' connections but was kicked out because of his bad habits. He was asking for small money by spreading the story you just told all over the place. You were a sucker, too.”

“But the story about proshetto is from a kid in the house who actually partied with him. Hopefully we'll be able to get some of the Extra Potion.”

“Extra Potion is dreaming too much. There are special classes all over the continent, and royalty and nobility could be involved, so even if you are the rightful owner, you can't touch it. If there's a way to find the finest of proshetto, ..., that's a better story. Proshetto is expensive not only because it is the main ingredient in the Extra Potion, but also because it is terribly hard to find.”

“Apparently. I don't know much about it, but you do?”

“Proshetto-related matters are the domain of the Guild of Magical Apothecaries to begin with. No wonder you don't know about it, you're a hunter-adventurer.”

“.....”

His mouth twisted in dissatisfaction at the word “guild,” but the middle-aged man paid no heed and continued his story.

“First, expert gatherers start by keeping a pitto of female offspring. Then they raise them until they become queens. That's the hard part first.”

“Why start with the kids? And female?”

“Because if you don't, they don't get attached to you. Otherwise, you can't control them. The reason why we use females is because queens are still gentler. You could use magic to get them to work, but it's more expensive to hire a wizard who can use summoning and enslavement magic, and there aren't many of them to begin with. I use the queens I've planted that way to find proshetto, but their period of maturity is pretty short. As soon as they start to accumulate magical elements and mature, the parents die off in all directions, when they have grown underground stems and produced offspring. That period is about five days, and when it's at its best, we're talking less than half a day.”

“So you let the pittos find it and pick it. That sure sounds like a lot of work, but the hard part is the preparation, right? That's not as hard as it sounds.”

“But then we'd have to rely on chance. That's why we look for things that aren't ripe yet. And you have to be on the lookout for them.

“Watch for it? You dig it up and leave it there until it's ripe?

“Once you dig it out, it stays there, it never ripens. They have to be left there to ripen. And if you leave it dug out and exposed to light long enough, it will grow above ground like a normal plant. If that happens, it will become a mere thicket. Proshetto is a variant that originally formed on the roots. So, after checking, if it looks immature, you mark it, give it time to get in good shape, dig it up, check it, and bury it again. It would be nice if each burrow was close by, but if they were scattered far apart, it would be a lot of work just to keep an eye on them. And then there are the wild kings and queens to contend with. And, of course, the competitors are also the enemy. And then you have to keep watch day and night, which can get expensive.”

“I see. ..... But Seina found thirty in a short time.”

“If it was in a pitto-hunting plot, maybe it was in a cluster without being ravaged by the kings. Or it's a hit year.”

“A hit year? Is there such a thing?”

“Even demons have them, don't they? Plants are the same way.”

“Hmm ..... but don't they eat ordinary pittos?”

“No. The purpose of eating proshetto is to develop the magical organs. I don't eat regular pittos. I'm getting off topic, but it surely can't be a coincidence that he found thirty.”

“Are you ready to help us?”

Chito's father leaned in, sensing that the middle-aged man was getting into the mood.

“Even if all this talk about air pirates is a bunch of hooey, it's still a little suspicious that you brought him here to separate him from his own party members.”

The middle-aged man looked at him, and an intellectual-looking man approached.

“Is the situation still the same?”

“Yes, there have been quite a few people talking about it here and there. The same goes for the people coming in and out.”

“Since Barigaru brought the kid here, things have been happening, and he's a close friend of the aristocrat here ....., so the first thing we need to do is find out where this kid, Seina, is going.”

The middle-aged man leaned back on the couch, dismissing Chito's father, who approached happily. His gaze turned to his minion, who gave him a small nod and left the office.

“Ernesto, there's a good chance that Barigaru knows your face, so don't hang around too close. I'll contact you when I have a plan in place.”

“All right. But Gando, if you can, I'd appreciate it if you could wait until just before Seina finishes training with the kids.”

The kids left a small amount of money there, and Seina saved a lot of money. The more time he has, the bigger that amount becomes.

“We'll be the judge of that. It's not uncommon for people to make mistakes at the wrong time because of immediate greed.”

“I know, I know. I'll just sit here and drink and wait. My kid's been doing a little better lately.”

The middle-aged man, Gando's words were meant as a dig at Chito's father, Ernesto, but he was too drunk on his dreams of the big money he was about to make to notice.

“Seina. May I have a word with you?”

Shortly after parting with Gushuka after the day's earnings report, Seina was approached as he was leaving by a senior guild official whom he had seen several times. He was a nervous-looking middle-aged man with his hair all back and silver-rimmed glasses.

“What are we talking about?”

“For you, it's something you don't really want people to know about. ..... If that's okay with you, it's fine with me.” The senior guild official looked around meaningfully and muttered coquettishly.

“..... understand. Let's go to Mr. Barigaru's office. No one will hear us there.”

“Is that okay? I'm sure he doesn't want to hear about it either. Actually, I have a conference room that I use for private consultations. No one can hear us there.”

“Wow, I understand. ..... But I have some urgent business to attend to, how about after one hour? If you tell me where you are, I'll come to you.

“Yes, that's fine. I'll be there. Just don't let anyone else know about it, okay? It's for your own good.”

When Seina agreed with a hint of slyness, the senior staff member left, in a good mood, after telling him where he was going.

[Csssshhhh, Seina's theatrics are getting more impressive now.]

<.....This is the fifth one. I wonder if there is less horizontal connectivity among the staff than I thought.>

[Barigaru's manipulation is very clever. Even so, to come to a planet like this and act as a decoy is a job worthy of the name of Lorelai. As far as the guild facilities are concerned, Seina has several staff members who stay close to Barigaru and report any problems to him.]

<I hope this time it is related to Chito's father.>

[It must be some nobleman in the guild who can do the work.]

<Well, ... I still think if they come, it will be in the city.>

[I think it's more likely, since there were so many tails, but if it's related to Chito's father, it's about time.]

<I've finally been able to control my collection-related spirit threads so that they don't run all the time, and I've been feeling a lot better about things, give me a break.>

If you were a low-grade tracker, the spiritual threads would connect to the other party. The Gando trackers seem to be of a very low grade, and when they walked through the city, the spirit threads connected with each other quite well.

[I would burst out laughing if the spiritual threads were red. Do you feel that Seina is popular?]

<You have been acting strangely lately, haven't you? I'd rather not be affected by that one if possible.>

In fact, he often saw various relationships in the city since then with a spiritual thread. Of course, he pretended not to see it, and didn’t pry into it. Even if it was between people of the same sex.

[I think it's impossible because I've only had relationships with people like that.]

<Oh, I'm sure you're right. I'm confident you'll like me only for the trouble I'm in. I wonder if it's thanks to Mabiya-sama that I'm doing this?>

[Don't be wicked, she is one of the few people who likes you, Seina. I'm going to take the long way home while playing the decoy role again today.]

<I'll think of it as looking for materials that can be used to make money.>

× × ×

Passing through a busy area, he took a little detour to a suburban area with fields and woods. There was nothing of note in the forests there, but if you visualized the magical elements, you would find a variety of rare plants and mushrooms. And, to his surprise, he found a few proshetto plants that were ripening. In case you were wondering, he had already confirmed that the forest here was a good place for people to gather things. Seina would have no complaints if he could pick them and make a little money, rather than leave them there and not be able to use them.

<It looks like it's about time.>

For a while now, Seina had been getting a lot of unfamiliar spirit threads, and he was becoming irresistible. When he was invited to an unfamiliar place, it was to be expected.

“Hey brother. You are Seina, right? I'm Chito's father, right?” Ernesto, looking like a complete thug, appeared in front of Seina with ease.

[You can see the hard work behind the dressing up.]

<Keep quiet. You'll make me laugh.>

He must have been frantically running after Seina, and even though he tried to look calm, he seemed to have trouble controlling his breathing. He used to be a bit of an adventurer, but he obviously didn't get enough exercise. In addition, he had a bit of a belly and a scruffy beard on his face. In Japan, he would have looked like an unemployed, reclusive “Pooh”.

“I hear you've been making a lot of money after using my lovely son in various ways.”

[The father takes the money and drinks it. That's a nice boomerang, isn't it?]

<You can shove it, but I'm the only one who can hear you.>

[Shouldn't Seina shove it for you?]

<I'd be upset if someone this young told me. Besides, we don't have all the actors yet.>

“You seem to be feeling pretty good about being Barigaru's relative, eh? Hey!”

He's thought he was being awesome, but to Seina, it was like a puppy barking, and he didn't feel threatened at all. On the contrary, he struggled to hold back his laughter at the standard appearance and threatening words. Until all of the actors were ready, though, he had to put up with it, and he had to put up with one more thing.

“Oh well. If you give me the money you've accumulated and the secret of the proshetto, I won't have to hurt you, right?”

The next moment, with a triumphant smile on his face, his backup was ready. It was time for the villains to appear. From the shadows of the trees in the woods and behind the crumbling old walls that remained unmolested, a remnant from the days when the city was a fortified town, came a group of men with bodies fitter than Chito's fathers. One of them was Gando, the leader of the group. He was dressed in light armor in the style of a hunter-adventurer, and although he was quite intimidating today, he was full of ideas, clearly looking down on Seina.

“Ah, Barigaru-san!”

“!!!?”

At Seina's words, the men were all distracted by the direction Seina was facing. Of course, it was only for a moment.

Seina ran like a hare and headed for the crumbling walls of the castle. It was a place that was completely off the radar for the men, a place that they had intended as an obstacle to keep their prey from escaping. That is why they were caught off guard and did not pursue him.

Seina picked up a fallen stick and propped it up as his first foothold, then, using a small hollow and a vine running along the wall as a guide, climbed up the wall, which was at least 10 meters high.

[Wouldn't it be easier with magic and an enchanted enhanced body?]

<Does that mean a way to climb the wall? >

[I mean to kill them halfway. Maybe you could try out the “thousand special moves” you have been developing?]

<A thousand moves ..... Are you joking about that? Or is it an inside job while I'm sleeping? I'm not sure if it's a joke or not, but I'd like to know what you mean.>

[Of course I'm joking. Yes, I am joking. I'm just disappointed in them. I was expecting them to show us something more interesting, but what is it?]

<What do you expect! I was really close if he came out with that kind of thing .....!>

[You surely can't escape from laughing so hard.]

<I just froze thinking!>

“Wait! Wait!”

Seina had gotten through the men's encirclement by going over the wall, and they all immediately started chasing after him. Although they made the mistake of just missing Seina, they split up into several groups, perhaps to pin Seina down, which seemed familiar to them.

[Why do they say “wait” when the person they are running away from is not supposed to wait for them? But if you say so, you have something to say back, don't you?]

<Would you do “putt-putt-putt” like the ocean?>

[That's a good idea, but .....]

<Not if you are the grandson of some great thief! That's enough of your weird ramblings. We're about to enter a very dangerous zone.>

[Okay, Death.]

It was a super dangerous route that Seina never would have taken no matter how urgent his business was or what happened to him.

As expected, Seina was hit by a tsunami of falling rocks, falling trees, stray stones from inexperienced hunters, mysterious traps, poisonous insects, the aftermath of a marital quarrel, and many other incidents, large and small.

“Ouch!”

“Whee!”

“Aaah!”

Aghhh!”

The men chasing after him were shouting loudly, mostly because they were suffering the aftermath of Seina's damage. Many were caught up in it, wounded and dropped out.

[Ah, I knew it; Chito's father is using some pretty powerful Bio-Enhancement magic.] Nayuta said when the damage has slowed to a trickle. [It looks like it's slowing down a lot, but that's why it's chasing the front. If you're that energetic, you should be able to work.]

<I hear it's more fun to stay idle and drink alcohol. By the way, that's your mother's eldest daughter, talking.>

[.....Ryoko, right? But I'm having fun hunting pittos. ..... And its good money.]

<I agree with you. By the way, that “lazy dad” has a very well-developed magical organ, doesn't he? But the number of magic elements he can accumulate is small for his size, he seems to be a complete ant and grasshopper type.>

[I could have been Chito's proud father.....]

<It is really difficult to correct a person's personality. Even if you correct their mentality with space technology, they will immediately try to revert back to their original state, so you have to either do a complete memory wipe and remodel to make them a different person, or you have to steadily establish it while correcting them. In a sense, learning to be comfortable is worse than learning to use drugs. Either way, it requires a strong will of the individual, and the time it takes is quite long. It may be short in the long lifespan of the universe, but here it will be a lifetime.>

[You don't have to be so precautionary, I'm not so vain as to think I can do anything about Chito's dad. All I can do is pull him away from Chito .....this is indeed a bad way to go.]

Seina slowed down when he saw the road ahead, which, despite being gently sloped, was quite steep, and there were several signs of collapse. Of course, at first glance it appeared to be nothing more than a hollow covered with grass and trees, but Seina's sensors were sending out a bright red warning signal that he should not set foot in the area.

“Gentlemen, it's a little bad from here on out, so I think it's time for you to give up.” Seina slowed his pace and let the men close the distance to where they could hear him.

“What the hell are you talking about, give up over there!” Chito's father bit the end of his sentence, perhaps due to fatigue.

“I see. I've given you a warning, so be careful.” Just as Seina approached a certain point, he heard a creaking sound of roots breaking in the soil. And suddenly, the path twenty meters in front and behind Seina's feet suddenly began to collapse.

“Uhhhhhhh, geez!”

Of course Seina was caught up in it, but the screams were mainly from the men who had tumbled down in the collapse at the edge. They were only slightly injured because they were not caught in the sand from above. They were just exhausted from being dragged around by Seina so much, so they were groaning and groaning, unable to get up.

“Oh, that bastard, he predicted we were coming and ..... this trap.”

“Idiot! A trap is to entrap your opponent. There's no way I'd set up a trap that would get you in trouble!”

“But that bastard was fine with it. He crossed over that way!”

Chito's father was right; Seina had used fallen trees and stones as footholds on the collapsing sediment, and although he was swept downward quite a bit, he made it across to the other side without incident.

“Damn! Go around and .....”

“Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop it! ..... You've got to be kidding me!” Unlike Ernesto, who started to run, the boss, Gando, suddenly began scratching his hair and yelling hysterically.

“Oh, hey. If you stop here, you'll ruin everything. We're almost at .....!”

“Shut up! You let me get involved with that son of a bitch!” Gando grabbed Ernesto by the collar and pulled him roughly to the ground. He bared his teeth and looked as if he was about to bite down on him.

“What?”

“Don't you get it? That bastard is definitely Mabiya's lover. He's the one who was favored by that Goddess, that evil Goddess, that damned handsome man!”

“You're over-thinking this, aren't you?”

“He's been getting into so much trouble everywhere he goes! Look around you! Everybody's got wounds, and many of them have dropped out!”

“What? Oh, that?”

They’d started with nearly twenty minions, but now there were only five left. In normal circumstances, they would have been in a rather abnormal state, yet they had come this far without realizing it, as if they had been drawn to it. It was the same phenomenon with Widow.

“You get it! Even if it's the trap you're talking about, it's still unusual! It's not normal!”

“I'm almost at ....., but I'm close, I've got the money and I've got the proshetto .....”

“I'm telling you, I'm not getting involved with Seina or you anymore! Don't you ever show your face in front of me again!”

Pushing Ernesto away as if to shoo him away, Gando hastily skipped the order to pull up.

“Collect those down there and pull them up! Hurry up!”

The minions must have been thinking the same way as Gando, none of them seemed to have any objections, and on the contrary, they spat at Ernest at times, as if they saw him as an abomination, and followed Gando as he fled the scene.

“Why, why not? We're almost there, okay? Almost ..... hihi!”

Ernesto looked at Seina and froze in fear; Seina stood still and just looked at them in silence. But in the shadows of the trees in the approaching dusk, the figure seemed to be some sort of unidentifiable monster.

Perhaps the figure brought back memories of the demon that had caused Ernesto's failure, or perhaps Seina's figure actually looked like that, but Ernesto was suddenly struck with a terrible fear and ran away after his men at a tremendous speed.

<He was scared to death, ... but it is understandable that he would be scared if a cliff suddenly collapsed.>

[Wasn't it Seina who was calm in the midst of it that scared you? Mabiya's thoughts.]

<..... I remember the old lady on the farm saying something about it protecting her from something really scary or something. But is it something that you would overreact too that much?>

[Maybe they are scary to those kinds of, back-street people. Isn't that the same reaction the people of Earth had to you, that would make sense if you put it that way?]

Seina let out a small sigh as the reactions of those who feared getting caught up in Seina's bad luck on earth in the past overlapped with the men he had just met.

<.....You may indeed be right..... hmm?>

The next moment he thought he heard the sound of leaves rustling above the forest, Nana landed soundlessly beside Seina, like a ninja.

“Are you hurt?”

“Nana? How did you find this place?”

“With all that fuss, I would have known even if I didn't want to.” Nana stared at Seina's path with a dumbfounded look on his face. In the distance he could see people gathering and making noise.

..... Convinced me.”

“Heh. The master has already made his move, so please leave the rest to him and go back Seina-sama.”

“What about Chito's father?”

“It depends on the situation. If he is caught quietly, he will be a criminal slave. In the worst-case scenario, he may be taken down. But as for the son, he has a mother, so either way, he will still be separated from his father.”

“So ..... it is.”

Seina's expression darkened even as he tried to break the ice; Seina had had a lot of bad luck, but he had been blessed with parents. Considering how much those two had been Seina's emotional support, it was still not an easy thing to break up with them.

“I think Seina should worry about Chito-san, since he still has a lot of training time left with those kids.”

“I understand ..... That's for sure.”

‘He who chases two hares will not get one.’ Considering his father's situation, it was impossible for him to make things go both ways. The only thing to do was to change the situation and give it some time.

“What's important to me is Chito.”

Nana smiled gently at those words.

“Are you kidding me? I ain't joking! The only way to get rid of this evil is to get away from here for a while. I'll leave the rest to you, Manado. No backstage work, just business as usual. Tell the young guys involved in this case to stay quiet at Gisa's hideout. Other than that, have them watch the store. That should be enough to keep the store running. If that's not enough, you can hire someone at your discretion.”

Back in the tavern's office, Gando fished out the money items from the desk drawers and cupboards and shoved them into his magic bag. A short distance away, the tavern's master, Manado, shrugged at the swashbuckling and said, “Understood. Leave it to me, Mr. Gando .....?”

There was some noise in the store, but the young man who always stood guard was now gone. Manado looked through the window of the lookout and what he saw was the waiter and Ernesto talking at the entrance.

“Boss ..... I think Ernesto is here.”

“Damn! He's a brazen fellow, but oh well. It's also a hassle to be followed around forever. I can't just kill him here, considering the business I'm going to have to do later, so I'll just give him a little money to get rid of him.”

At Gando's words, Manado sent a hand signal through the peephole. He closed the peephole and headed towards the door.

Oh, um, ... Gando, where's Mr.?”

“Come in anyway.”

At the moment he unlocked the door, Manado was blown away by Ernesto, who came through the door. Or rather, Ernesto was pushed through the door and went inside.

“What's up? What is ....., in front of .....Barigaru!”

Barigaru entered the office as if he was the real deal and looked around with a friendly smile, as if he were meeting an old friend.

“It's quite a nice place, Gando. As a hunter-adventurer, you were always third-rate, but as a business owner, you're okay?”

“Let’s go!”

“Hmm ..... but you use such scum to do the back work, maybe you're still third-rate.”

One of the two black robed figures that entered at the same time as Barigaru pointed a staff as tall as he was at the fallen Manado, and he went straight into unconsciousness. The two figures, partly because of the color of their robes, looked like gods of death. He then tried to point his staff at Chito's father as well, but he fled to Gando in the back with a quick, cockroach-like movement.

“Gaga gaga gaga, Mr. Gando, sir.”

“Ernest ..... you were planning to trap me from the beginning .....” Gando snarled at Ernest, who clutched at him to hide behind him, keeping his gaze on Barigaru. He clenched his fists and was about to hit him.

“Well, I didn't mean to. I've been taking care of you, you know. .....”

Sensing Gando's anger, Ernesto quickly moved out of range of his fist, while turning his eyes like a child who had been beaten.

“Oh, you don't have the balls to do that to that scum. But beyond that kind of scum, there are sex pittos like you lurking around the corner. I learned today that it was you. Gahahahahaha!”

“Hmph! You've got a nastier one than me. The day will come when you'll be ruined too.”

“Gahahahahaha! You know, that 'Mabiya's Souvenir' thing? That Goddess is a scary thing for someone like you who wants to harm a person you have feelings for, but I'm protecting him, you know? I don't have to worry about him pointing a curse at me, and this is how I was able to find you.” Barigaru turned a smug look to Gando.

“Kuh! I thought even something like this might help .....”

“Well, I've heard enough of your bitterness. Are we done here?”

Barigaru took a step toward Gando. The two mages behind him also readied their staffs.

“Hey Ernesto. Are you serious when you say you owe me a favor?”

Yes, of course!”

“Well, then, you'll be useful at the end of the day. .....”

Gando raised his left arm and muttered something to Chito's father while pointing at him, and the jewel in the ring that was clamped on his finger shattered with a loud clang.

“Heh? Heeheeheeheeheeheeheehee!”

From the shattered jewel, a black haze-like substance seemed to cling to Gando's finger, and at once, it flew like an arrow toward Chito's father and pierced him.

“A forbidden artifact!”

While Barigaru and the two mages were preparing themselves, Gando kicked Chito's father toward Barigaru, as if using him as a shield. He then flipped himself around and ducked under the desk.

“Gando! You son of a bitch!”

“Hahahaha! If you don't hurry up and uncurse him, this whole area will be contaminated with the Black Curse! Ernest! These are the guild's special mages. They can help you. Hang on tight, please!”

Gando's voice trailed off with the sound of a heavy iron door closing, as if there was a way out from under his desk.

“Hihiiiiiiii! Help me! Help me, help me, help me, ... hie?” Chito's father, crawling closer to Barigaru, was suddenly stuck by the encased sphere shield.

“Damn! That son of a bitch had it. It's true, being a person you have feelings for is tricky.”

“Beard! Let me out of here! Let me out! Let me out! Let me out!” One of the hooded mages, who appeared to be a woman, held out her hand to Barigaru in a profane manner.

“Don't talk to me like I'm a bad whore! Your daughter will cry!”

Barigaru pulled out a pendant from his pocket, the magic crystal part of which was maybe an inch long and tossed it to the female mage.

“Whoa! It's so big! And it looks like you've accumulated plenty of it.”

“That's why your husband ran away from you!”

“Eternally seventeen years old. Don't say things that will destroy a maiden's pure heart! Give me alimony... alimony! I'll take these magic crystals.”

“Your child is twelve! You had her when you were four years old! Get off your stupid ass and get on with it, you thirty year old!”

“Damn it! You look like Enma, but you're really trying to expose someone's age fraud. Go back to hell, you hell-bound master of hell!”

While complaining about various things, that female mage was doing something with Barigaru's magic crystal.

“Eee! I don't understand you sometimes! Hurry up!”

“Ooshii, special kill! Mille-feuille barrier!” And the shields around Chito's father laminated into hundreds of pieces.

“Oooh! As expected of a thirty-year-old who's only great with magic!”

“We'll talk later, Beard!”

“.....”

While Barigaru and the female mage were arguing, the other mage was desperately trying to maintain his shield. This one didn't seem to have time to join their conversation.

“What are you doing? Help me quickly!” The voice was muffled, and Chito's father frantically tapped the shield.

“That's not why I'm trying so hard to keep you out like this, trying to protect those who are uninvolved. If you become a medium of the Black Curse and become a complete cursed nucleus, the whole area around you will be contaminated and a mass of undead will arise. It’ll be a Bon Dance Festival of the dead in this city!”

“Oh, what about me? What about me? You guys are on special duty, right? You can break the spell, can't you?” Chito's father was a tearful, snotty mess.

“Gando said so, but we need a lot of catalysts and magic-filled aids to break the spell, and we don't have time to prepare them, and ..... it looks like it's too late. Give up.”

“Lies! Lies! Lies! Lies! Lies! I don't want to .....! No!”

“I'll give you my sympathy. I'm sure that when Gando used the black curse on you, he was planning to take care of it. And if you can keep us here, he could escape at his leisure ..... What do you think about that?”

The woman mage brought her face close to Ernest, who was sobbing half-heartedly, forgetting his age, as if to speak softly to him.

She then said to Ernest, “Oh, ... oh, that son of a bitch! That bastard! That son of a bitch! Fuck you, ...” And the layer of shielding surrounding Chito's father grew even more, his face contorted in hatred, his voice no longer visible or audible.

“..... I could have imprinted a hate orientation on you.”

“I could have done that, you know?”

“Hmph! That girl told me so much about what happened to Chito. He got clawed because of this guy, and still had to help out for a small fee because he needed the money. ..... Majonii’s daughter left the party to watch, and Seina from Beard's place came in to assist.... ...and her face got brighter and brighter and brighter... ..... I heard that, and there was no way I could ever forgive this man for what he did! So don't worry about it, Beard!”

“..... I see. Sorry.”

“Of course, I want the black-cursed salt, too, though! Such a good deal is rare, so there's no way I can pass it up!” The mage seemed to have quickly forgotten that she had cheated Chito's father.

“If you didn't spout such lines, even the nobility and ..... royal family would welcome you as their exclusive mage. .....”

“Ha! Those damned scum, they'd have hands instead of mouths! ..... Is a bit of a mess. This is seriously not good.”

“..... oh my God, ... oh my God, oh my God, oh my God!” The voice inside began to leak out again as the seal's laminated shields began to break and disappeared one by one; Chito's father was already pitch black, only his eyes were glaringly white.

“That thing can't be contained!”

“Oh my God! The curse is starting to ride in his voice. ..... Oh God, you piece of shit! You're a big, flabby, lazy, dickless bastard.”

“I don't understand!”

“His magical organ is surprisingly large! I didn't check it because I didn't have that much magic, but the black curse is crystallizing it and converting it into more and more power!”

“Damn, this bastard is the best at causing trouble!”

“Come on, come on, get it out! You've still got some in you, don't you? You've still got some in the tank, don't you?” She suddenly sounded seductive and really glamorous and held out her hand in a glamorous manner.

“Damn! I'm even more pissed off that the quality is surprisingly high! I can't believe how much time and money I spent getting and filling this thing .....”

Barigaru was holding a large magic crystal in his hand, no smaller than the one he just handed over.

“It's a small price to pay for the main ingredient of the elixir! Get out of here! You'll be late!”

At the female mage's urging, Barigaru reluctantly tossed her the other magic crystal.

“Heh ..... two big ones dangling from it. I'll squeeze them all dry in no time.”

“.....”

Barigaru was silent, as was the other mage, as if he had already lost the energy to rush in. His gaze was averted a bit, too.

“Alright! Alignment complete! Ikkeee

“I see. But that thing is safe, right?”

“It's fine! I got it! All right, all right, all right! ..... and ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding!”

And gradually the color of the shield began to fade, and the inside became fully visible. There was a pitch-black, human-shaped, charcoal-like object. What made it different from charcoal was that it caught the light and glittered finely.

“Without the catalyst, the black curse is just like a tiny little cavity. If you un-curse the core a little bit, you can get it .....”

The black salt mass suddenly crumbled away, and the only thing holding its shape was a magic crystal.

“Yes. It's done, handsome.”

“.....kkk.”

At that moment, the other mage collapsed and slumped to the ground.

“Oh, teacher. Are you okay?”

“Yeah, well, somehow. It was hard for me to concentrate, though, because of Jovia's stupid talk.”

The other mage who took off his hood was an older man, his face was very sweaty. He was glaring at the female mage called Jovia with resentful eyes.

“It's a consideration, a consideration to ease the tension. They say that luck comes to the gate of laughter.”

“How many times have I told you that you're the only one who can control him while talking that stupid .....?”

“But you succeeded, so that's good. I'm sure that Sensei hasn't crystallized in a long time. Your age makes it hard to get hard .....”

“Here, stop wasting my time and get ready to leave. The black-cursed salt is to be delivered to the guild at once. Don't fool around with it. And give me back my two magic crystals.” Without further ado, Barigaru held out his hand to Jovia.

“Since you succeeded in having sexual intercourse ....., I'll give you ..... as a reward.”

“You don't want the black-cursed salt, do you?”

“I'll return it~. Thank you very much. So I have the priority to buy everything except the teacher's share, right? Ne? Right?”

What was pride? Was it good? It was like that. Jovia's flirtatious manner was really a lie, but since she was a beautiful woman, many men were fooled by it. But of course, that period of time was short and fleeting.

“Oh, I have to give that money to Chito and the little boy. I'm not going to cheat on you, so stop lying and acting like a liar! And don't forget his magical organ. That's why we're making this farce.”

“Ahh, how beautiful. This black glimmer is just supreme!”
JOBIA
The brilliant pervert rubbed her cheek against the large urine bottle with a rapturous expression. She moved at her own perverted pace until the end.

“Yes, yes, yes, yes. It's a lie anyway. If I knew I could get the black-cursed salt, I wouldn't have to flirt with the beard. Oh, thank you very much. I'll give you the cloth of the sealing spell as a freebie.”

Jovia floated the fully crystallized magical organ buried in the black-cursed salt, wrapped it in a small cloth and tossed it carelessly to Barigaru along with the two magical crystals. In contrast, he carefully sucked every grain of black-cursed salt into a huge chamber pot-like glass container he had pulled out of his magic bag and sealed it tightly.

“Oh my goodness, I love this shiny black stuff!”

The competent pervert, rubbing her cheeks in ecstasy against the huge chamber pot, did not break her perverted pace until the end.

Chapter Twelve: All is not as it seems

After parting with the two mages, Barigaru headed for a private office in a corner of the guild market. Locking the entrance door, he passed through the front reception room and entered the back office. He then opened the door to the wardrobe in the back. It was a nearly empty box with only one work outfit hanging there. Once he checked it, he closed the door.

“.....”

Barigaru stepped in without hesitation, and the next moment he emerged from the wardrobe in Herrera's study in the lord's mansion on the hill.

“Did it go well?” Barigaru said to Herrera, the lord there.

“Of course, but they were both completely emptied. Of course, you'll have to pay for their re-filling, right?”

“The proof of that ....., no, the witness. If I had that, I could have all the nobles involved stripped of their titles. With the confiscated property, it should be easy to replenish it, right? And you've got the boy.”

Barigaru handed the packet of magic crystals to Herrera, who smiled. But as she accepted the package, her eyes turned grim, and a clear streak of blue appeared at her temple.

“..... Hey Barigaru, what's this cloth?”

“Hmm? Jovia said it was a cloth for sealing spells, ... what about it?”

“That woman, my underwear!”

The expression on her face, which was still soft, turned into a praetorian one. The synergistic effect of the inverted triangular glasses that she used to make her impression tougher, in an attempt to show her dignity as a lord, made her quite powerful. In other words, she was a “raging demon”.

“.....I thought it was a nice soft cloth, but ..... really?”

“I'm sure it has the family crest of the house in the embroidery design! Barigaru, didn't you notice?”

“I thought it looked very familiar, but ..... usually you don't think so, do you? So ..... you really don't think it's used or something?”

“I'll kill her if you do that!”

“She's your friend, you can laugh at her and forgive her, she's just a stupid dog.”

This goofy exchange made Barigaru breathe a sigh of relief, as if he had finally been relieved of the pressure of his duty. Then, as if in a home he knew well, he took out a bottle of his treasured wine from the small wine cellar next to the reception desk and uncorked it.

The contents of the conversation were so important that no maid would stop him from doing so, as he was paying his dues. But either way, Barigaru was in a barroom mood and touched the maid's buttocks, so he couldn't be a deterrent and always left Herrera to her own devices.

“You're too stupid! You know how much trouble I'm in with that big idiot, don't you?”

“From my point of view, they're both similar, but ..... I'd say you're a bit on the light side for Jovia, considering you're forgiving her for that level of sarcasm, just in case.”

“Then you can tell me directly! I'll listen to your usual incomprehensible ramblings without complaining!”

“I'll let you off the hook. ..... Well, you were going to put your hand over your mouth, weren't you? She hates that about you.”

“Sometimes it's better if you hit me. You know how much trouble she can get into if she keeps it all bottled up?”

“I know just the thing to vent, so I'll just push it to him.”

That's Seina, as we all know. He knows just the thing to give to a peculiar older woman's toy.

“I'm sorry to hear that, as I'm sure you'll agree, ..., but that's not a bad idea. Anyway, I'm going to use this one to vent on the damned things.”

Herrera looked at the package and smiled a cruel smile. It was an even more terrifying expression than her earlier predatory look.

“But even so, the royal family is very clever to intentionally leak a dangerous artifact and make people use it. The royal family is the reason why they had to do it in the first place, so it's even more frustrating.”

“The overuse of knighthoods is a common practice in times of great wars when budgets are eaten up. Besides, no sane person would use a black-cursed artifact.”

“That's true, too.”

“..... So when do we get the elixir?”

“We are supposed to get one of the regular ones that Jovia has.”

“Hey! The Black Curse salt is the most exquisite salt you could find, and you have a lot of it, don't you?

“Rare class can make it, so don't be stingy and tell them to give it to us!”

“Jovia said, 'I'll give it to you if you don't mind the birth of an undead lord?' I don't want any part of it.”

The legendary Lord of Death, who had turned every living thing on one continent into the undead.

“Hey, what's that? That's a disaster on par with the Ancient Dragon!”

“In the first place, it is an elixir that cures all illnesses and even raises the dead. It's akin to turning a person into an undead person. The same is true of the Extra Potion, come to think of it. Even though it restores limb loss, it is only the person's normal limbs that are restored. It is common knowledge that a trained limb is not regenerated and that a period of rehabilitation is necessary afterwards. But when it was not so well known, there were many accidents caused by it.”

In other words, someone who had an accident in combat and thought that as long as he drank the Extra Potion, he could continue fighting in the same condition would be hit by the poor regenerative limbs.

“The elixir is like a one-or-two gamble when there is nothing you can do. So when it comes to using it safely and reliably, it's 'please follow the dosage directions’.”

“Even court magicians know that much, don't they?”

“Knowing it and being able to use it are two different things,” he said. And anyone who tried to rely on that kind of thing was definitely not in a sane state of mind, of course he'd overdo it!

He said, “Well, you know more about that kind of gossip than I do, don't you?”

“Hmph! It's okay. If he's going to destroy himself, he's going to destroy himself, and it's none of our business.”

“Heh. Even if that were the case, a bottle of Jovia’s is also three times more potent than normal, so you said that a similar accident might happen.”

Incidentally, “If you don't drink it, it doesn't matter!” he said smugly, but Barigaru didn't tell her and cut it off because it didn't make sense.

“.....I hate that girl. Oh, she’s not old enough to be my daughter anymore. Hmph!”

Herrera turned away with a miffed look on her face, perhaps frustrated that he had read her mind. Well, that part was mutual, but Barigaru swallowed his words.

“I've already put a bug on Gando, so I'll leave the rest to you.”

“I've already sent the bees after that one. Reports say he’s already out of town. I've also got the pitto hive under surveillance.”

“So, I guess this means the little prank on the house is off the hook, huh?” He gulped down his glass of wine as if he had no more use for this place. He put the lid on the wine, put it in his magic bag, and stood up.

“Barigaru..... sorry for making you feel bad about your job.”

“That's exactly what I wouldn't have minded if you hadn't interfered with the little guy at home.” Barigaru responded to Herrera's honest apology with a flippant remark.

If the 'Mabiya's Souvenir' is real, I'm going to have to ask for your pardon,” Barigaru replied. “Oh, but by all means, push it to Jovia!”

Thus, Seina was sacrificed to the “talented pervert”.

“..... I see, Chito's father.”

Barigaru returned home via the guild office. He called Seina into the parlor and explained what had happened, not, of course, the truth as it was. Seina was prepared for this to some extent and listened calmly.

The residents could not rest easy knowing that a forbidden artifact magic was used in the city, and more than anything else, that little boy must be shocked. If the body was still in decent condition, they could have him buried. ..... So, ostensibly, he would be sent to the island as a criminal slave, where he would do hard labor for the rest of his life.

“Okay. ..... So what about Chito?”

“I've already taken him to see his mother. She's a strong woman, so don't worry. We've also made arrangements for some of the confiscated assets to be paid to you and Chito, who are the victims. I know there are a lot of emotional reasons why that's not the end of it, but his father was working with those guys, so he deserved what he got.”

“If it's possible, I'd appreciate it if you'd give Chito my share of the money.”

“I'm sorry, but that would mean declining the kid's share and not giving it to him after you've received it. But there's more to it than that, isn't there some pitto-related money in the kid's custody?”

“Ah! That's right.”

“However! Make sure you split the money in three equal parts. Money over and above the correct remuneration is often harmful.”

“..... Understood. Yes, that's right.”

Big money required experience to spend it. As much as you could earn, you could train yourself, but beyond that, it was a one-time gain. It was not possible to train continuously, and often one lost one's livelihood. If that was the case, it was best not to take it, or if you did take it, not to use it at all.

“Don't be so disappointed. Don't be discouraged, but that won't stop us from selling proshetto and Extra Potion. If you add those to the total, it's a lot of money.”

“Ohhhhh, that's right.” Seina agreed, remembering their reaction when they heard the amount of money Proshetto was getting.

“Anyway, I'm sure that little boy is also talking with his mother about the future. I don't know what will happen tomorrow as a result of that, but if it looks like it's just the two of them, the little boy and Gushuka, we can bring in the other abductees.”

The next morning, Seina went to the guild's auditorium as usual, and there, next to Gushuka, was Chito. And with a beaming smile, he bowed deeply to Seina.

“Chito..... are you okay?”

“Yes. I had a good talk with my mom and we slept ..... together last night.”

There was a look of happiness and deep relief that he could be with his mother. Above all, he was full of life, without his usual somewhat languid mood. Thinking back, it was doubtful that he could have slept properly with his father.

“I've been talking about Dad ..... actually meeting with Mom for a little while now. Thanks to my brother, I've been able to make more money in the real world, and my dad has been away from home more often, so .....”

“Raska has been talking to us here and there, and the parents of the kids, who had been avoiding us, were starting to care a little bit more about us...There was Chito's dad, but the fact that our party was getting higher grades was a big part of it, and the guild people are also starting to help us out a lot.”

Chito's mother was an active hunter-adventurer. With the guild staff and the parents of the pitto boy working together, it would be easy to bring the two together without Chito's father noticing.

“I didn't know that .....”

[I guess it's partly because the higher ups in the guild who were messing with Seina are gone, and the atmosphere has become more open. I think the smooth progression of business has also been a big factor.]

<Yes, that's true. Communication has improved, and there's a sense that the staff is more proactive in a lot of ways.>

“I was thinking about my dad, and I was thinking that one day this would happen to him, and ..... But I have a mom and a sister.”

“Because parties are like family.” Gushuka smiled as she placed her hand on Chito's shoulder. She seemed more relieved by the situation than Chito.

“But I'm sorry, bro. Mom actually wanted to thank you, but she had a quest that she couldn't miss, and she said we could meet again later.”

“My worries are taken care of. You can take your time when you're more settled. But then Chito will be at .....”

“I can take you to my house now, and you can have your meals and baths here, and then you can go home to sleep.”

“I don't need to take a bath for a day or two .....Gush!” Gushuka's hand on Chito's shoulder squeezed and shushed him.

“Seina big brother. Please help me again.”

“Yeah, I've got to make sure I don't worry your mother. Well, let's refresh our spirits and do our best today. But I'm in a high mood, and in times like this, I need to be calm as usual.”

Those are also the words Seina told himself, because in his experience, these were the most dangerous times.

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Thanks to Seina's advice and attention to detail, the day's pitto hunt ended without injury.

Chito's good memory was also his learning ability; he remembered Seina's every word accurately and was slowly beginning to show the flexibility to use it in other situations as well. Unfortunately, he was not as good in that respect, but he had accumulated a large amount of information and had a high search ability that allowed him to retrieve it instantly. He was not the type of person who knew ten things when he heard one, but when he heard ten things, he never forgot them. Most hunter-adventurers were party members, so what Chito lacked in ability, the others could make up for, and Chito had abilities that the others did not.

And, most importantly, with the father's problem solved, Seina's party and the atmosphere around them was good. In a sense, today was the day when the party's abilities, along with the knowledge it had accumulated, were maximally demonstrated.

“Well, today went well, didn't it?”

As usual, Seina went to the bath first, and after making Chito faint in agony, he and Gushuka washed the women's hair, limited to ten, and took their seats after being handed a pot with a generous serving at the cafeteria.

“Thank you for your hard work. Thank you for everything you have done for me today. Thanks to you, big brother, I've experienced a lot and I've gained a lot of confidence.”

“I'm glad to hear you say that.”

In fact, for quite some time now, Seina had been using no abilities at all and letting the two of them lead the hunt. He was confident that this would work well enough with whomever they worked with.

“You're done with me for today, but have you two decided what you're going to do after this?”

“About that, actually, Raska-san has asked me if she could join us after my brother is out.”

“Heh? But is that okay when she has a party to go to?”

“She said that the party with those boys is breaking up.

“She told me that too.”

“Did they get into a ..... fight?”

Seina's concern was about the ensuing feud; he was worried that the two boys from Raska's party might harbor resentment toward Gushuka and the others.

“No,” Gushuka said, “I'm not worried about that. It was just that when they teamed up with us and hunted with us, they realized that they had clearly different goals for each other's future, so they want to build a party for the future now.”

“I see... ....., but you are very solid.”

“At that age, some people start doing things like apprenticeships for hunter-adventurers who hunt in the vicinity. At fifteen, they are officially recognized as hunter-adventurers, but either way, a year before that, they graduate from pitto hunting and begin their training in the nearby magical sea of trees, so this is a prelude to that.”

“If a party is doing well during pitto hunting, they often keep that party when they become hunter-adventurers. In this city, many would-be hunter-adventurers come from the

neighborhood, so it's easy to form a party, but it's hard to find a good match, and it takes time to get used to each other.”

“I see. As I recall, they said they wanted to go to the abyss of the Sea of Magic, but if that's the case, they want to sort out their party while they still can. ..... But I heard the basic party is five people?”

“When three people are the core, it's easier to form a party and it's also easier to pass opinions since there are so many.”

“You've got a lot to think about ..... but are you sure Chito is okay with that?”

“I haven't decided what I want to do yet, ... so I'll think long and hard about it. I'm not going to be a pitto boy forever. There are a lot of things I have to learn here.”

“I see. If you need any help, I'm here for you.

Seina was happy to see such positive signs. By the way, Gushuka and Chito both had a second helping of each and finished two buckets of that pot.

<Maybe ..... that means they were so anxious that they had no appetite?>

[If so, it was worth all the trouble.]

But that didn't mean that Seina's appetite, or the amount of food he could eat, would increase. As usual, Seina's cauldron and half of the two loaves of bread were gratefully stockpiled.

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“Thanks for all your hard work today, kid. I'm glad you made it anyway. I'm glad you made it to ....., and today's results put you in eighth place out of all the parties.”

Back in the auditorium, Barigaru was in charge of presenting the day's results, just as he had been the first day.

“I guess we didn't get first place, as expected. I guess it was a little difficult because of the river entering the place.”

“Instead, I learned a lot.”

“Yeah. It was fun.”

Basically, there was no doubt that pittos don't like water. If there was another route to escape, it was only natural that they would choose that route. So when the riverfront came in, the number of nests would decrease a bit.

“Don't be so pessimistic. This is the top of the all-time list for captures and weight in this section of the river. The party in charge of this area has been ranked 50th in the past, so 8th place is a

pretty good result. It's a good thing to be consistent even in these difficult conditions, so keep up the good work.”

Barigaru's words of praise made both Gushuka and Chito's jaws drop.

“Well. The total number of pittos is 188, weighing 676.8 kilograms, or 338,400 Yen in total. That's 400,000 Yen. That place is difficult to conquer, so it seems the individuals were larger as well as the forest.”

It was Chito who seemed the most relieved and happy to hear Barigaru's words. After all, this time the money distributed to him would be his earnings. In a way, it was like a starting salary for him.

“Next, as an additional reward, we finally finished the first day's survey of the forest. I would have done the survey more quickly if the Guild of Magical Apothecaries guys hadn't persisted ..... Well, it's a proshetto deal, but anyway, no queens or kings were identified. And the map you guys made was confirmed to be almost right.”

“Almost, sir?”

“Almost. Various guys got in and made a lot of holes, so the pitto was on alert and dug new passages here and there, ... so that's why the information was changed to add to it. But the location of the burrow itself was accurate, so you'll be paid an additional 500,000 Yen.”

“Well, that's .....”

Now all three, including Seina, looked surprised.

“Do you think that's a lot? But the success rate and danger of a quest can vary greatly depending on the availability and accuracy of prior information. Some fools disregard investigative work and look down on those who do it, but the research and information are worth it. In terms of this forest plot, I'd estimate that the number of pittos captured will increase by 30%, so that amount is justified.”

“I see. That's certainly true.”

Along with Seina, Gushuka and Chito also deeply affirmed. It was from places like this that they gained the knowledge they needed as hunter-adventurers.

“Next, regarding the proshetto, ... we also got the auction results of the Extra Potion made from it. Well, I can't tell you the price and quantity of that bid because it's classified, but your share is 11.7 million Yen.”

“““!!!!”””

Seina and the kids were wide-eyed at this amount of money, as if they had no idea what they were getting into. It was a miracle that they did not raise their voices, or rather, they were too shocked to speak.

“Finally, three million yen will be paid as a special reward for the month.”

“”””.....”””

Already the amount of money seemed too big to wrap their heads around. Gushuka and Chito in particular were half-conscious because the digits to be calculated were larger than usual.

“Heh. This guy is like buying your future, and he wants to keep the best people around. But it's the result of a number of rather unorthodox circumstances that would result in an amount like this. The breakdown of the special merit rewards is confidential, so just think of it as, well, a lot of things happened.”

“.....Barigaru. If that's all, I'd like that one, please.”

“Oh. I've done the math.”

Barigaru grinned and offered Gushuka and Chito the note that was tucked into the ledger book.

“What?!”

Gushuka covered Chito's mouth as he tried to raise his voice as usual. After a few moments, when Chito had calmed down, she asked several times if he was okay, and then removed her hand.

“What is this ..... about, brother?”

But Chito's eyes, which seemed to have calmed down, were vacant. And Gushuka also looked a little confused.

“This is exactly one-third of the total earnings for this month. That's what you're getting paid. I told you on the first day, didn't I? I said, ‘I'll take it’.”

“..... What?”

Chito looked at Gushuka, seemingly unable to swallow immediately. In response, Gushuka gently tapped him on the shoulder and affirmed. She had understood the meaning of Seina's words from the beginning.

“But brother. This is a little too much .....”

“Well, well, I didn't expect it to be this much either, ... but it looks like it’s safe to give it to you now. Of course, it will be in the form of savings to the guild, but I'm sure your mother has already been briefed on the situation.”

“But, because this is .....”

“It's your just reward. A little more is better for your future.”

“Brother ......”

“Chito..... and Gushuka too.”

Barigaru began to speak with a sense of finality.

“This is also a test for you.”

“A test, you say?

Yes. Hunter-adventurers are sometimes rewarded in such a big way. But there are also those who let it get the best of them. They may hate the simple work, find it boring, or take on quests that are not worth their size in order to get a higher reward.”

“..... Dad.”

“It is unfortunate, but in a way fortunate, to have such examples close to home. I've learned the consequences of that. Don't let that happen to you. Be careful that you don't.”

“”Yes.””

Chito and Gushuka affirmed as if to punctuate Barigaru's words. Incidentally, later that day, Chito received a payment in the hundreds of millions related to the “Salt of Black Curse,” and both mother and son were devastated. Fortunately, Chito's mother, a veteran hunter and adventurer, was able to continue her normal life with the help of Gushuka's family.

[If this were between two adults, we would be celebrating in a bar or somewhere.]

<I'm still a minor myself. Either way, I'm never going to drink.>

Gushuka and Chito were sent home with a guild escort to discuss this matter with their parents as soon as possible. The guild and Barigaru agreed that Gushuka's father would take his place.

“Barigaru. I'm sure you'll be fine, but what kind of person are the two parents ......?” Seina asked as he made his way to Barigaru's office, mindful of the now empty auditorium.

“Gahahaha. Are you worried that the amount is getting much bigger than you thought? Then don't worry. Both parents are active intermediate and advanced level hunter-adventurers. There's no need to worry about that much money. You can leave the teaching of the kids to me.”

“I see. That's a relief.”

“But it's a crazy amount of money for a couple of pitto kids to make in a month. It's going to take some time to convince them of that.”

“Hah ..... Well, anyway, this has lifted a lot of weight off my shoulders. It's hard to be the one to mentor others, isn't it?”

“And you seemed more comfortable with it than I thought you would be, huh?”

[Seina, you have a great deal of experience as Kamidake’s Captain, even if you are just a decoration.]

<Is that what it is?>

[No experience is ever wasted.]

Barigaru and Seina entered the office and were cut off from the noise outside. Sitting down on the sofa, they took out a cup of tea from the magic box, which they had purchased from a coffee shop along the way.

“Anyway, thanks for your hard work. This time around, I know that you are well qualified. I'm sure the higher ups at the guild are satisfied now.”

“What happened?”

“That goblin kid was hanging around. He even put a watch on my house.”

“Oh, I see.”

“Oh, you noticed. Good, good.” Barigaru folded his arms and nodded in satisfaction.

“The goblin boy himself has no power, but he still gets a certain amount of treatment if he gives his family's name. That's why they were spreading rumors about you all over the place.”

“So the Guild became suspicious of me?”

“But if the guild saw that you would benefit them, they would be more willing to protect you. We've done a lot of cleaning up, and the atmosphere is much better, so I don't think they'll be fooled by the rumors of the goblin kid, who had a bad reputation to begin with.”

“Oh, by the way, he spoke to me at the museum the first day I went outside. I left him to the people who were looking for him and left, but I didn't report it because it didn't matter, should I have?”

“I'm not a kid, I wouldn't interfere that much. Nana reported it to me, and I didn't ask you anything, did I? Well, that's the thing. He couldn't fool you; he got caught by the people he fooled. He was in a tight spot and went around blabbing about you.”

“Huh? So it's my fault they suspected me?”

“Sooner or later, the same thing would have happened, although we'd have been grateful for the help we got in finding the troublesome people who were connected with Chito's father. It's not just the guilds that got a good cleaning, but the city as well. My only regret is that we couldn't

expel the goblin kid from the guild, but I'm sure the Gingham ..... goblin kids own family would not approve of such an ugly story.”

“I guess political considerations are unavoidable.”

“It could blow up anywhere, but it happened here, and no one believed it. Either way, they'll never hang around us again.”

[Sounds like it was a brilliant bait-and-switch.]

“I see. So that's what changed in the guild.”

Not all of them, but some of them were wary of the atmosphere, but Seina didn't mind since it was normal for him to be looked at that way on Earth.

‘This means that your mission is accomplished. You'll get 10 million as a special reward. But you'll be giving it to me right away, gahahaha!”

“I'm surprised there is a reward .....”

“It's the same as a pitto hunt, where if you make a move, you'll be rewarded accordingly. The guild's cleanup alone will bring in enough money to cover the costs of waste, improve efficiency, and reward the city's public safety. I could have offered more, but considering that it’s you who is 'Mabiya's beloved', I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to make a loan to the top, gahahaha!”

“Oh, ... I see.”

“Anyway, the groundwork has been laid. You have been accepted by the city and the guild, so we can move on to the next stage.”

“The next step?”

“I know you're going to be a hunter-adventurer. Or would you still rather be a pitto boy?”

“Aaaaahhhh! Of course I want to be! I will be! Hunter-adventurer! I had so much fun hunting pittos, I forgot about it.”

“Gahahahaha! That's good. Anyone who enjoys pitto hunting has the qualities of a hunter-adventurer. Then let's go to the official registration tomorrow, shall we?”

“Yes, sir!” Seina affirmed with a big smile. It was similar to the elation of going out into space for the first time.

[I'm glad you're enjoying yourself, but please don't forget your purpose.]

<I haven't forgotten about it. That's what hunter-adventurers are for. But that doesn't mean you can't have fun, right? Because we are adventurers, right?>

Once in space, Seina found a much larger place and more accepting people than on Earth. At the same time, it was also a way of entering the framework of society. Although it was a joy to be needed, Seina's effect was so great and so far-reaching that it didn't feel real.

The fundamentals were the same here, but the steps were slower and more visible. It was direct in what results one's work and how one was compensated for it. The more pittos you hunted, the more money you made. It was that simple.

<I can be an adventurer!> Suppressing a desire to shout out with glee, Seina followed Barigaru's lead with a light footstep.

Afterword - Postcard Theater No. 14

There is a fairy in front of me.

I'm lying in bed with a cold, and my sisters are busy at work, and I'm all alone in bed, and I just can't help but miss them, and I feel like I'm about to burst into tears.

“Oh my gosh, are you okay?”

Before I knew it, a fairy appeared and stayed by my side, petting me.

Her hair is golden like mine. But while mine is honey-colored, hers is a brighter, sun-kissed gold, thinner and softer.

Her skin is the same as sister Karen's, well-tanned, but smooth and beautiful.

Her eyes are the color of the sun when it shines in the “holy spring” of the cave where I used to live, a jewel-like azure, similar to the color of the sea in Kamidake, so beautiful you could almost be sucked into them.

Her gentle smile is like the sun beginning to rise on a desert morning.

It is warm and comfortable.

(..... Is this what it's like to be a mother?)

I left her on the planet where I was born, my mother ..... a Shrine Maiden, so I couldn't live with her, and she was very kind to me when I saw her, but somehow, somewhere ..... I don't know, she stopped being a Shrine Maiden. I don't know, but I feel like I'm not a Shrine Maiden anymore, and I've lost my power. Is she somehow closer to her brother than she is to me?

The sister with the bunny ears who takes care of me...

“You're a shorty! You're a shorty!”

I asked her, “What's that? When I asked her what it was, she jumped up and down ..... and seemed a little broken. But the canine-eared lady secretly taught me a lot of things.

(.....Seina I wish my brother was a loli.)

“Oh my, that looks like fun. ..... I wonder what she's thinking?”

Don't tell the fairy either. Don't tell anyone until I meet my brother.

I'm not going to be selfish because my sisters are working hard.

(Fuku-chan is working too, you know. ..... maybe?)

Fuku-chan always seems to enjoy talking about her time with her feathered friends. So I guess it's just a little bit different.

“It's work! No matter what anyone says, it's work!”

I'm sure that's what both the slightly broken rabbit-eared lady and the canine-eared lady are saying, because they look so serious together at this moment.

So I'll do my best to meet Seina as soon as possible, and I won't be selfish.

(But ..... I can't wait to see him.)

Seina is just like the sun, just like the fairy.

..... I'm getting sleepy again. I'm not coughing or sniffing, but I'm not a very beautiful sister,....., and my brother says he has a cold.

But still, when I get hot in the chest, I feel very sleepy, ... sleepy, ...

“Oh my goodness, you're sleepy.....Good night, Acha.”

Yes, good night. Good night, fairy who looks a lot like Auntie Mitoto.

“When you wake up, ...Seina, I hope your brother is back,.....”

“.....Mia?”

After a long day of work (staff sisters, talk) and pampering by Petit Washu, Fuku rushed back to Acha to feed her spirits.

She wanted to talk to her, but Kirche, the head of Fuku-chan's moral department, told her not to disturb Acha while she was sleeping, so she had to be patient.

“Mii?”

She was a little worried that Acha would miss her while she was gone, but she was relieved to find the scent of Mitoto lingering in the air. The ladies of the staff seemed to think that this was just Acha's imagination to keep her calm, but it is true that those who don't know Mitoto don't understand how a stranger could enter this place. If this is the case, it is best to explain to Acha, who is looking forward to her visit, that she is a “fairy” in borrowed form. Of course, Kiriko and her friends would have understood that it was the real Mitoto in one word, but for Acha, a fairy is dreamier, and Acha accepted it.

“.....mya.”

And Fuku looks at the single sofa in the corner of the large room.

“.....”

There is also D, who was watching everything, who silently responds by waving her paws.

When Fuku confirmed this, she gently rubbed her cheeks against Acha as if relieved, lay down to snuggle up against her, and closed her eyes.

The End

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Sorry for the delay, this is the third Renza volume. A lot happened this time too.

In the middle of the night, there is the sound of something breaking and the noise of people.

Well, it's close to the station and there are drunks and students sometimes making noise, so it's like, “What are you doing in the middle of the night?”

There was an electric fan heater under my feet, and I had made a simple kotatsu with blankets, so I thought it was because of that, but there was no smell from there. As usual, there were a few people bustling outside & the sound of something continuously breaking..... I looked out through the peephole lens of the front door to see if it was possible, and the apartment across the street was illuminated by a red light.....

I quickly put on my pants and jacket, went outside and looked down to see a pillar of fire coming from the first floor of the building next door.

(At this stage, you can't do human-powered firefighting anymore.)

Even if I go out, I can't be anything but a spectator. This is an area for experts. I quickly go back to my room and think about what to bring out in case of emergency. Savings passbooks and PC backup HDs... PCs can't do that. Everything is impossible even with HD. No matter how you think about various collections, it is impossible. When you think about it, there is nothing that you can bring with you. I was shocked when I realized that I almost had to give up.

In old movies and dramas, when it comes to fire scenes, one wrapper is wrapped in furoshiki. Among them, there are some people who are strong enough to have a large eight-wheeled cart and a chest of drawers, but if you think about it, in the past, most of the people's assets were one chest. There is a word such as “Kansu deposit”, but in many cases, the deposit and the clothes are all the property of the person, and conversely, most important items are gathered there. It's convenient to pack your things in a hurry!

If only there had been a spirit thread storage at a time like this ..... While I was thinking about such a trivial thing, the experts appeared with sirens blaring. The experts came out with sirens and shouts, “If there is a danger of fire, there will be a warning,” I thought to myself, “If that

happens, I'll just be on my own. Fortunately, after about three hours, the noise outside calmed down and there was no action on our side.

I thought, 'You've reached your limit, haven't you? It's okay, isn't it? You did your best.

I woke up in the late afternoon and went back to sleep again in the evening at ..... I was safe for the time being, but for a while I was in a state of lost concentration. Fires are scary. It is really important to be careful of fire. I felt that again.

Well, that was five percent of the reason for the delay. The rest was due to the location of the separate volume and my inexperience.

Anyway, if I had to divide the book, I had to reorganize it, add the missing parts, and since it was only Seina's story as it was, I had to add Kiriko's story, which was supposed to be in the next volume. In other words, if I write properly, the total volume of this volume will be the same as the previous volume? I'm still in the same state as far as writing is concerned. ..... At any rate, this seems to be incurable now.

Next time, Seina, you will finally become a hunting adventurer....., but the truth is that pitto hunting was fun to write, and there are more episodes I want to write, but if I do that, I will never be able to go to the continent to the sky, to the universe, and to the world. I can't go to the continent to the sky, to the universe.

Miss Airen, I'm afraid I'm going to seriously lose my role to a competent pervert without a chance to appear. That pervert is a magic-related Airi-like being, but she is not a heroine. She is a talkative and frightening person who can even get her great stopper, his wife Kiriko, to go along with her. Well, let's hope that your daughter will do her best.

Nayuta, the Philosopher's Stone, is also assertive, but “she” is not assertive at all. As a result, I think Airen is going to be the most decent person.

Anyway, Seina is going to challenge that monster in his training as an apprentice hunter-adventurer. Yes, he is going to take on the monster. But just when you think it's going to be an easy win, there's a terrible trap .....

See you in the next volume.

Masaki Kajishima